THE VINE OF ISRAEL  
NO. 3243

A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews,  
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**“Return, we beseech You, O God of Hosts: look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.”  
Psalm 80:14.**

I FEEL somewhat straitened on this occasion because of the specialty of my subject. I have been persuaded by the Society to preach on behalf of the Jews, but my mind does not quite run in the direction which is prescribed for it. I have been so in the habit of preaching the Gospel to everybody, knowing neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, that the very recognition of anything like nationality and specialty is somewhat difficult for me. I do not think that the recognition of the distinction is wrong—no, I think it right—but it is so unusual that I scarcely feel at home. I would sooner, by a thousand times, take a text and preach the Gospel to sinners or to saints than discourse upon a special race. Yet is it necessary and, therefore, let it be done. And I trust the Holy Spirit may make our meditation profitable. Assuredly, if there is any distinction which might be maintained, and I think there is none, for that distinction of Jew and Gentile seems to me to be wiped out and obliterated—if there is any distinction, we may, at least, remember that which lingeringly subsists between the seed of Israel and the nations, for God’s election of old fell upon them—and when the old world lay in darkness, gleams of light gladdened their eyes! To them belonged the oracles. They were long the sole preservers of the precious Truth of God which they have handed down to us. And if through their unbelief we have taken their place, we cannot but recollect who occupied it for so many centuries—and we cannot but look with extraordinary tenderness and affection and earnest desire to that elder family whom the Lord loved so long and towards whom, I think, His love still burns, as shall be seen when the day comes in which He shall gather Israel again unto Himself!

We shall view the prayer of the text in its reference to Israel. “Return, we beseech You, O God of Hosts: look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.” The vine was peculiarly a type of Palestine and the Jewish nation. When this Psalm was written, the Gentiles were not in the Psalmist’s mind, but only Israel. So let us now speak of Israel and let us pray to God that He will return in mercy, behold in pity and visit this vine and the vineyard which His right hand planted.

I. First, let us reflect upon WHAT AN AMOUNT OF INTEREST SURROUNDS THIS VINE—this chosen people.  
Brethren, Israel has a history compared with which the annals of all other nations are but poor and thin. Israel is the world’s aristocracy and her history is the roll call of priests and kings unto God. At the very beginning, what interest attaches to the planting of this vine! The Psalmist speaks of the Lord bringing the vine out of Egypt and casting out the nations that He might find a trench wherein He might place Israel’s roots that she might strike deep, and take possession of the soil. But what wonders God worked in the removal of Israel from the soil of Goshen, wherein her vine seemed to have taken deep root, until the wild boar of Egypt began to uproot her! Never can we forget what He did at the Red Sea. Even at the very mention of the name, we feel as if we could sing unto the Lord who triumphed gloriously and cast the horse and his rider into the depths of the sea! What marvels He worked all through the wilderness when He turned the Rock into a pool of water and made refreshing streams to follow His chosen along the burning sand! Neither can we forget the Jordan—our hearts begin to sing at the mention of the name— What ailed you, O Jordan, that you were driven back when the Lord’s ark led the way through the depths of the river and the priests stood still in the midst, while all the hosts of His people passed over dry-shod? Neither can we fail to exult as we think of the planting of the vine in Canaan. Saw you not the walls of Jericho tottering in ruins at the sound of the ram’s horns when Israel gave her shout, for the Lord was in the midst of His people? Therefore the sword of Joshua smote the Canaanites till they were utterly destroyed! The sun stood still upon Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, because the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man, working marvelously with His people, that He might settle them in the land which He gave unto their fathers—the land which flowed with milk and honey!

When I think of such a planting, it seems to me that this vine can never be given up to be utterly burned with fire after wonders as these! It is not God’s fashion to cast away a people for whom He has done so much. The commencement of Israel’s national history is by far too good to close, as we fear it must, if we judge only according to carnal reason. An era brighter and more glorious must surely dawn and the Lord must bring again from Bashan, and lead up His chosen nation from the depths of the seas. Once again He will make bare His arm, even He that cut Rahab and wounded the dragon—and the whole earth shall behold all Israel, both spiritual and national—singing in one joyous song, the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb! The very planting of the nation makes us feel the deepest possible interest in its welfare. O God, behold and visit this vine, as the vineyard which Your right hand has planted!

Let us reflect again upon the prosperity of Israel and the wide influence which the nation exercised for centuries. I am keeping closely to the Psalm, which is really my text, for we are told that after the planting of the vine, “the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.” No nation has ever exercised such an influence upon the thought of the world as the Jewish people have done. I grant you that some other nations exercised greater influence upon the world’s art and sculpture and the like, for Israel eschewed much of art and science, not greatly to her loss, especially since the reason for it was so greatly to her gain. But the idea of one God, which the Lord had graciously written upon the hearts of His elect people, though it took many an age to erase the natural lines of idolatry which Nature had imprinted there—that idea of the unity of the Godhead is a treasure handed to us by the seed of Abraham! The grand Truths which were contained in type and shadow and outward ordinance, and given to the chosen people of God, exercised a far more powerful influence over the world than, perhaps, most of us have ever dreamed! I feel certain that the religion of Zoroaster came from the Jews. I believe that much of whatever is pure in Eastern religions might be distinctly traced to the teachings of Moses, to gleanings of the Israelite vintage which were carried to the nations through their commerce and intercommunication—perhaps directly and distinctly by the teachings of Jews who journeyed there as exiles in captivity.

The earth had become corrupt even in father Abraham’s time. And though, here and there, there might have been found goodly individuals like the Patriarch, Job, adhering to the simple worship of the one only God, yet for the most part, the whole world was sunken in idolatry. But the Light of God came to it and remains in it, gleaming strangely in the darkness like flashes of lightning amidst the blackness of a tempest! That light has always come, I believe, by the way of Israel! The original light of tradition grew dimmer and dimmer and threatened to die out, for in transmission from father to son its brightness was sadly clouded with human error. But the Truth retained much of its vitality and purity in the midst of Israel and from Israel it influenced the rest of the nations. In the days of Solomon, how proudly did the Temple stand upon its holy hill, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, the one Pharos of the midnight sea of humanity! That little country—we often forget what a very little district Palestine occupied—was, nevertheless, the very queen among the nations! From far-off Sheba they came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and to other lands the rumor of his glory extended—and all his greatness was connected with the worship of God, for she who came from Sheba, came to hear all the wisdom of Solomon “concerning the Lord, his God.” That little land thus influenced all lands and transmitted far-off down the centuries what was known of the ever-blessed God among the people! To me it seems so sad that she that sat over against the treasury should now be poor. That she that laid the daily showbread before the Lord should now be famished. That she that piled the Temple and brought the offering, should now turn away from the one only Sacrifice and should these many days remain without priest or temple! Alas poor Israel! Our hearts take the deepest interest in you and we pray the Lord to look down and behold, and visit this vine, when we remember the days of your glory and all the splendor of the Revelation of the Most High in the midst of His people!

Nor does the interest become one particle the less when we come to the time of Israel’s decay. She would imitate the heathen and go aside to false gods—nothing could cure her of it. She was chastened again and again and, at last, it came to banishment and the people were scattered. Alas for the tears that Judah and Israel shed! What ocean could hold them all? How God’s people were made to smart, and cry, and groan! Let the waters of Babylon tell how salty they flowed with Judah’s griefs. How could they sing the Lord’s song in that strange land? What a history of woe has Israel’s story been! And then, when they were brought back cured of idolatry as, thank God, they most effectually are, there came an equally mournful decay—for formalism, the absence of all spiritual life— the mere observance of outward ritual, came into the place of idolatry and the people in whom all the nations of the earth were blessed had the Christ among them, but refused Him! “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” Woe was the day! Speak of it with sevenfold sorrow. He came for whom they long had waited—Israel’s Hope—and they refused Him! Yes, they crucified Him.

My tongue will not attempt to tell what came of it, when His blood was on them and on their children. Earth never saw a more terrible sight than the siege and destruction of Jerusalem! Then did they sell the ancient people of God for a pair of shoes and the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, were esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter. The enemy plowed the holy place, sowed it with salt, and the seed of Abraham were scattered to the four winds of Heaven! Alas, the evil ceased not when the last stone was overthrown, but wrath followed the fugitives. Through many, many centuries Israel was persecuted—shame covers my face—persecuted by those who called themselves Christians! The blood of Israel hangs in great clots upon the skirts of Rome and will bring down upon that thrice-accursed system the everlasting wrath of the Most High! Did they not grievously oppress the Jews in Spain and every other Catholic country—remorselessly hunting them down as if they were unfit to live—torturing them in ways that it were impossible for us to describe, lest your cheeks should blanch as you heard the horrible story? The men that were of the same race as the Christ of God were so hated by the professed followers of Jesus that no indignities were thought to be great enough, and no severities to be fierce enough for execution upon those they thought to be the execrable Jews!

Thank God, such persecution is now over—let us hope forever—at least in the Western world. The race would have been stamped out, however, if Rome’s tender mercies could have worked their will. Go to the Ghetto, today, in the Jews’ quarter in Rome, and see the Church, as I have done, in which a certain number of Jews were compelled to hear a sermon, once in the year, leveled at their own race and faith, and over the door of which is written what from such a quarter is a wanton insult to them—“To Israel He says, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” Verily it would be so eternally if the hands of Rome were the hands to be stretched out—when she encouraged, if she did not command the racing of Jews in the Corso, and the pouring of contempt upon them in the rudest fashion! Israel would never worship images, saints and virgins! Blessed were they as a nation for this thing, at least, that they utterly rejected the idolatry of which Rome is shamelessly guilty! It were far better to not be a Christian than to think Popery to be Christianity, for it is one of the vilest forms of idolatry that ever came from the polluted heart of man! Alas, poor Israel, what have you suffered! What tongue can tell your woes? I feel compelled to apply to Israel the language which Byron applied to Rome, when he called her “the Niobe of nations,” and reckoned all sorrows beside hers but petty misery—

*“What are our griefs and sufferance? Come and see Jerusalem in heaps, and plod your way  
O’er steps of broken thrones and temples.”*

Look, too, on a princely people crushed under persecution, laboring and finding no rest. Princes were hanged up by their hands. The faces of elders were not honored. Then was fulfilled Jeremiah’s Lamentation, “How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! They that did feed delicately, are desolate in the streets—they that were brought up in scarlet, embrace dunghills.”

But we will not end here, my Brothers and Sisters. The interest which we feel with regard to Israel and which makes us pray, “Lord, visit this vine,” rises as we think of its future. I am no Prophet or interpreter of the prophecies, but this much seems clear to me—that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, will have dominion over them and they shall be converted and shall acknowledge Him to be the Messiah who was promised to their fathers—so does the New Testament teach us as well as the Old! It seems to me that we may work for the conversion of Israel with the absolute certainty that if we do not see it, ourselves, yet it shall be seen, for the natural branches of the olive, which for a while were cut off, shall be grafted in again, and so all Israel shall be saved. The future of the Gentiles in the fullness of its Glory can never be accomplished till, first of all, the Jews shall be ingathered. You shall have no millennial day, or full brightness of Messiah’s Glory, until yonder, by Jordan’s streams and Judah’s deserted hills, where once the Savior worked, and walked, and preached, the song shall yet again arise of Hallelujah to the God of Israel!

One more thought and then I leave this point of the interest we take in Israel. We must forever take a special interest in the Jews because of them came our Lord. He was so completely a Man that one forgets that He was a Jew, and, perhaps, for the most part it is best that we should, for He is more a Man than a Jew. But still, “He took not up the nature of angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham.” Jesus is the Son of David. The Jews have a part in Him, after the flesh, which we have not. And, amid all the privileges which we enjoy, we can well afford to let them have everything that they can claim. And they can certainly prove a special kinship to Him whom our soul loves. Oh, if it were for nothing else but that our Savior was of the Jews, we ought to love them and make them the subject of our prayers and of our earnest efforts! Surely the mention of that will suffice and I need not say so much as one solitary word more! Interest in the Jews, indeed, is a very wide subject, and we have said enough for the present purpose.

II. NOW, SECONDLY, WHAT IS IT THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE NEED? We have been exhorted by all these things to pray for this vine. What is it that is needed?

The answer of our text is, “Look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.” A visitation from God is the one thing necessary for Israel. For what purpose should God visit the Jews, then? I say, Brothers and Sisters, it is the one essential thing in order to give them spiritual life. Our acquaintances with the interior of the Jewish commonwealth at the present time is not very large, but some of us have observed that there are two sorts of Israelites. Some are devout—devout men with some of whom it has been our privilege to have hearty fellowship in matters of common interest touching the things of God. When we have spoken together of the Providence of God and of faith in the Divine Mercy, we have been much of the same mind. In the late debate brought on by Colenso, we were able, in comparing notes, to feel the same zeal for the value of the Old Testament and for the Glory of the ever-blessed God! Whether we were Christians or Jews, we were equally zealous to repel the infidel assaults of the famous master of arithmetic. We meet now and then with men whose sincerity and devotion we could not doubt at all—would to God that their sincerity led them to search the Scriptures and to examine the claims of our Lord Jesus! Such men lament that many of their people seem to have no religion, or—what is almost the same thing—to have nothing more than the outward form. Their being of the Israelite race is distinctly recognized and never for a moment held back—the Sabbath is almost universally hallowed, for which let Israel put to shame many socalled Christian lands! Much is done that is commendable, much which exhibits high integrity and uprightness, but yet, to a large extent, the race is sunk in worldliness and misled by superstition. Oh, that God would visit the Jew and endow him with an enquiring and unprejudiced heart, with longing after the God of his fathers, with a deeper reverence and a truer zeal for the Glory of Jehovah!

The visitation of God may well be entreated that He would next grant enlightenment to His people, taking away the veil which has been cast over their eyes and enabling them to see the true Messenger of the Covenant. There are thousands of Israelites today who only need to know that Jesus is the Messiah and they would as gladly accept Him as any of us have done. It seems to us so strange that they can read the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah and so many other plain passages of the Prophets and of the Psalms without seeing that the Man of Nazareth is the Christ of God! Yet they do read, but the veil is on their hearts so that they do not perceive Christ in their interpretations. Alas that the Son of Righteousness should shine and Israel should be in darkness! With many of the seed of Abraham there is an honest desire to receive whatever can be shown to be the Truth of God. If the Lord will touch their eyes and remove the scales— what an enlightenment on the whole nation would follow! A nation would be born in a day! What joy for us, what honor to God, what happiness to themselves if they might but be delivered from their present alienation! O God, You alone can do this! We cannot. All arguments seem to be in vain, but do You behold, and visit this vine!

When the spiritual life of the nation shall have been revived and there shall be an enlightenment of the intellect, they will only need the Spirit to work upon the heart. Even as the Holy Spirit has quickened and regenerated us, so must it be with them, for there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in this matter. The same regenerated work is needed—the same enlightening of the Holy Spirit—and if the Lord will do this, our hearts shall be exceedingly glad!

III. WHAT, THEN, CAN WE DO? We are great debtors to Israel, what can we do for her?  
Some people are always afraid of telling Christian people to do anything. They mutter between their teeth, “The Lord will do His own work,” and they are afraid that they should be interfering with God’s prerogatives. Ah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I am not afraid that some of you will ever do the Lord’s work, for you do not do your own! That part which you can do is neglected! Do not be so mightily frightened lest you should be too active! It is God’s work to visit Israel and gather out His people and He alone can do it—but He works by means. What, then, would He have us do?  
I answer, the first thing we can do is to pray for Israel. You believe in the power of prayer, do you not, my Brothers and Sisters? Why, some of us can no more doubt the power of prayer than we can doubt the force of a steam-engine or the influence of the law of gravity, because to us the effects and results of prayer are everyday things! We are in the habit of speaking with God about everything—and receiving replies which to us are as distinct as if He had spoken to us with words. We can speak boldly in prayer to God concerning Israel! No nation can be nearer to God’s heart than the Jews. We may be bold with the mighty God. We may open our mouth wide, for He will fill it. We may plead with Him urgently after this fashion—“Will you not glorify Yourself by the salvation of the Jews? What could You do that would more signally strike the whole world with awe than if you were to turn this wonderful nation to the faith of Christ? You have taught them the unity of the Godhead, you have burnt this Truth into their very souls—now teach them the Deity of Your Son who is One with You! Bring them to rejoice in the Triune God with heart and soul, and all lands shall hear of it and say with wonder, ‘Who are these?’ Great God, were not these Your messengers of old? When You needed heralds, did You not look to Israel? You took James and John, and Peter and Paul. You will find such as these among them, now, if You will call them—both boastful Peters and persecuting Pauls—whom Your Grace can transform into mighty testifiers for the name of Jesus.!”Let us pray to God to do this. We can pray!  
The next thing we can do is to feel very kindly towards that race. I know all that will be said about converted Jews, and I lament that there should have been grave occasion given in many instances. But, for my part, I have been glad of late to smart a little for the sake of my Lord. I have said, “Well, it was a Jew that saved me and even if this professed convert should have a hypocritical design upon my purse, I had better be deceived by him that turn away an honest kinsmen of my Lord.” I do not marvel that there should be deceivers among the Jews, for have not we plenty of such in our churches, who, for the sake of loaves and fish and pelf, creep in among us, pretending to be followers of Christ when their hearts know nothing about Him? In all ranks and conditions of man, hypocrisy is sure to be found! But for all that, we do not turn round and say, “The Gentiles are a bad lot. We will have nothing more to do with them because two or three of them deceived us.” The Gentiles are always taking us in! We know they are and still we have hope for them. And so must we always have hope towards Israel—and instead of thinking bitterly and speaking bitterly, we must cultivate kindness of spirit both to those who become Christians and to those who remain in unbelief. I, for one, thank God that this land has now for several years swept away the civil disabilities of the Jew. He is no longer a stranger in the land, but he settles down in the midst of us and exercises all the rights of citizenship. May the kindness of feeling which has prompted this change—and it came, I think, mainly from earnest Christians—lead the Israelites to think kindly of our faith!  
Another thing we can do, dear Friends, is to keep our own religion pure. I marvel not that Jews are not Christians when I know what sort of Christianity, for the most part, they have seen. When I have walked through Rome and countries under Rome’s sway—and have seen thousands bow before the image of a woman carried through the streets— when I have seen the churches crammed with people bowing down before pieces of bone, hair and teeth of dead saints, and such like things—I have said to myself, “If I were a worshipper of the One true God, I would look with scorn upon those who bow before these cast clouts, moldy rags, pieces of rotten timber and I know not what besides!” No, no, good Jew! Join not with this idolatrous rabble! Remain a Jew rather than degrade yourself with this superstition! If the Lord has taught you to know that there is an unseen God who made the heavens and the earth, and who alone is to be worshipped—if you have heard the voice of thunder which says, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God,’ stand you to that and go not one inch beyond it, if the way before you invites you to the worship of things that are seen, and the reverence of men who call themselves priests—and the whispering out of every filthy thought into a confessor’s ear! No, no, no, Israel! You are brought very low, but you are far too noble to become an adorer of crosses and wafers, and pictures and relics!”

Even in our own land there is a good deal which one would not wish a Jew to regard as Christianity. To my mind, baptismal regeneration is about as glaring a piece of Popery as there is to be found in the world! And they can hear that lie publicly taught in England! Grievous, too, it is to my very heart that they may hear it among those who profess a purer form of faith than that of which we have spoken. Try, Brothers and Sisters, to keep Christ’s religion as Christ taught it. Purify it. Let it come back to its original form!  
Labor also to be Christians in ordinary life. If a Jew says, “I would like to see a Christian,” do not let him see a person full of superstitions. Let him see one who believes in the Triune God, who tries to live according to the commands of God, and who, when he talks about Jesus, lets you see the mind which dwelt in Jesus—the same mind being in him. When once the Church of God shall bear a clear testimony to the Truth of God both with lips and life, great hindrances will be taken out of the way of Israel. I know you say, “Well, Jews ought to know that we hold a very different faith from Romanists.” I know that you think so, but I am not able to perceive how the Jews are to learn the distinction, for Papists are called Christians as much as we are! Their religion is dominant in some countries—it is prominent in every country. How is the Jew to know that it is not the religion of Christ? As he thinks that it is so, he declares that he will have nothing to do with it—and I, for one, cannot condemn him, but approve of his resolve! I only hope that as the years roll on, we who worship God in sincerity and have no confidence in the flesh, we who are saved by the faith which saved Abraham, who is our father after the spirit though not according to the flesh, that we, I say, may be able to bring this purer faith more clearly to the knowledge of Israel and that God will lead His ancient nation to be fellow-heirs with us! We must keep our doctrine pure and hold it individually with clean hands and a pure heart—or we have not done all that we can for Israel.  
This being done, I will next say that we must each one evangelize with all his might. Do this not among Jews, only, but among Gentiles, also. Wherever you are, tell abroad the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Do not live a single day, if opportunity serves you, without testifying concerning the love of God which is revealed in the Cross of Calvary. Your prayer should be for the whole Church of God, “Behold, and visit this vine.” And as a large number of God’s elect ones are as yet hidden in darkness, let us pray unto the Lord that He would visit this vine and make these branches to spring out into the Light of God—that on them, also, there may be rich clusters to His praise!  
Brothers and Sisters, we are, ourselves, saved, are we not? Come, before you go away, let the question be put to you, Are you saved? Are you really Believers in Jesus? Is the Christ formed in you? Have you realized that He is your Savior? Are you trusting Him now? Will you live to Him? Are you consecrated to Him—spirit, soul and body? If you are, that is the first thing. If you are not, I cannot ask you to pray for Israel, or for anybody else till, first of all, God has put a cry into your soul for yourselves. If you are saved, then let me ask myself and you, “Are we doing all we might for the honor and love of Jesus?” Sitting on these seats, might not many say, “We have not yet begun to live for Christ as we ought”? May the Lord quicken you!  
There was a young man here, one Thursday night, when I closed with some such words as these, who derived lasting benefit from them. He was a gentleman doing a large business, to whom it had never occurred that he might preach Christ. It did occur to him that night—and he straightway went to the town in which he lived and began to preach in the streets! He is now the pastor of a large Church, though he still continues his business—and his is an example to be imitated by many! I would to God that some young man might be quickened to feel that he must do something, for Israel perhaps, for Christ, certainly! And you, Sisters, may you feel a Divine impulse upon you while you pray God to visit the vine which He has planted! May He also visit you and make you fruitful vines unto His praise! The Lord bless everyone of you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 46.*  
To the Chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth.

This Psalm is often called “Martin Luther’s Psalm.” Whenever there was any great trouble, Luther used to say, “Let us sing the 46th Psalm together and then let the devil do his worst.” This is the Psalm, too, from which Mr. John Wesley preached in Hyde Park at the time of a great earthquake. While the earth was shaking and there was a great storm, Mr. Wesley preached from the second verse—“Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

Verse 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. All creatures have their places of refuge. “As for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats and the rocks for the conies.” All men also have their places of refuge, though some are “refuges of lies.” But God is our refuge and strength,” the Omnipotence of Jehovah is pledged for the defense and support of His people. “A very present help in trouble”—One who is near at hand—always near, but nearest when He is most needed. Not much entreaty is required to bring Him to the aid of His people, for He is close at hand and close at heart, “a very present help in trouble.”

2, 3. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and are troubled, though the mountains shake with the

swelling thereof. [See Sermon #1950, Volume 33—EARTHQUAKE BUT NOT HEARTQUAKE— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Here we

have, you perceive, a mention of the greatest convulsions of Nature, yet the Believer fears not! Doubtless, too, these verses are intended to be a picture of the great convulsions that take place in the Providential dealings of God. States and kingdoms that seem to be as solid as the earth will one day be removed. Dynasties that seem as fixed and firm as mountains may soon be swept away into the sea of oblivion. We may have famine, war, pestilence and anarchy until the whole earth shall seem to be like the sea in a great storm! Yes, hope may fail with many and the stoutest hearts may shake at the swelling thereof. Yet let the worst come to the worst, God’s people are still safe! As one old writer says, “Though God should, to use His words concerning Jerusalem, wipe the earth as a man wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down, yes, though He should break it into a thousand shivers, yet need not His people fear, for if He does not protect them under Heaven, He will take them up to be with Him in Heaven!” If Heaven and earth could be mingled together, and chaos could return, yet as long as God is God, there is no use for the Believer to fear!

3. Selah. We may well pause and renew our confidence in the God who has never failed us, and who never will fail any who trust Him.  
4. There is a river, the stream whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. Whatever river may have been in the Psalmist’s mind, it was the symbol of Sovereign Grace flowing freshly and freely from the sacred Fountain of Eternal Love to make glad the people of God! And now we have the Inspired Book, we have the preached Word, we have the many precious promises, we have the blessed Spirit, Himself, and all these make a glorious river, the streams whereof “make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.”

5. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The Hebrew expression is, “at the turning of the morning.” Our marginal reading gives it, “when the morning appears.” “God shall help her at the turning of the morning.”At that period when the night is the blackest, just before the light begins to come, then shall God help His Church. Child of God, this promise is to you, also! When the night gets thickest and the gloom is the heaviest, then God shall help you “at the turning of the morning.” He may tarry for a while, but He will tarry no longer than is wise. You shall find, in looking back upon God’s dealings with you, that although He sometimes seemed to be long in coming to your help and you cried out, “Lord, how long?” yet, after all, He did help you and that “right early,” too!

6. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. God has but to speak and His stoutest foe shall dissolve like snow when the sun shines on it.

7-9. The LORD of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the work of the Lord, what desolation He has made in the earth. He makes wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder; He burns the chariot in the fire. [See

Sermon #190, Volume 4—THE DESOLATION OF THE LORD, THE CONSOLATION OF HIS SAINTS— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Here the

Psalmist invites us to behold what God has done in the past. He has desolated the desolaters and destroyed the destroyers! War has been a terrible scourge to mankind, but our God is Master even over war. When I look at the old ruined castles all over our land, I cannot help saying to myself and others, too, “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth,” and when I stumble upon some broken-down abbeys, or monasteries and Popish cathedrals, I can but wish that there were more of them, that we might see many such desolations which the Lord has made in the earth! He will get the victory over all His foes and break all His adversaries in pieces—however long He may wait before putting forth His great power in judgment upon them!

10. Be still, and know that I am God—Here is the command and here is the reason which will help us to obey it. Judge not the Lord hastily! Murmur not at His Providential dealings with you! Be not hurrying and scurrying here and there, but, “be still.” In silence and in confidence shall be your strength. “Be still, and know that I am God”—

10. I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. If God is willing to wait, you need not be impatient. His time is the best time and He will be exalted in due time.

11. The LORD of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.  
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ONE ANTIDOTE FOR MANY ILLS  
NO. 284

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 9, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.”  
Psalm 80:19.**

THIS seems to be the only prayer the Psalmist puts up in this Psalm, as being of itself sufficient for the removal of all the ills over which he mourned. Though he sighs over the strife of neighbors and the ridicule of foes, and laments the ill condition of the goodly vine, though he deplores its broken hedges and complains of the wild beasts that waste and devour it—yet he does not petition the Most High against these evils in detail. But gathering up all his wishes into this one prayer, he reiterates it over and over—“Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause Your face to shine. And we shall be saved.” The reason is obvious. He had traced all the calamities to one source, “O Lord God, how long will You be angry?”

And now he seeks refreshing from one fountain. Let Your face no longer frown, but let it beam upon us with a smile and all shall then be well. This is a select lesson for the Church of Christ. In your troubles, trials and adversities, seek first, chiefly, and above everything else, to have a revival of religion in your own breast—the presence of God in your own heart. Having that, you have scarcely anything beside to pray for. Whatever else may befall you shall work for your good. All that seems to impede your course shall really prove to be a prosperous gale—to waft you to your desired haven—only, take care that you seek God. Be sure that you are turned again unto Him and that He would give you the light of His countenance—and so shall you be saved.

This morning’s sermon, then, will be especially addressed to my own Church on the absolute necessity of true religion in our midst and of revival from all apathy and indifference. We may ask of God multitudes of other things, but among them all, let this be our chief prayer—“Lord, revive us. Lord, revive us!” We have uttered it in song. Let me stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, to utter it in your secret prayers and make it the daily aspiration of your souls. I feel, Beloved, that notwithstanding all opposition, God will help us to be “more than conquerors, through Him that loved us,” if we are true to ourselves and true to Him. But though all things should go smoothly and the sun should always shine upon our heads, we should have no prosperity if our own godliness failed—if we only maintained the form of religion, instead of having the very power of the Holy Spirit manifested in our midst.

I shall endeavor to urge upon you this morning, first of all, the benefits of revival, as we shall find some of them suggested in this Psalm. And secondly, the means of revival—“Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts.” Thirdly I shall exhort you to use these means, that you may acquire these benefits.

I. THE BENEFITS OF REVIVAL TO ANY CHURCH IN THE WORLD will be a lasting blessing. I do not mean that false and spurious kind of revival which was so common a few years ago. I do not mean all that excitement attendant upon religion, which has brought men into a kind of spasmodic godliness and translated them from sensible beings, into such as could only rave about a religion they did not understand. I do not think that is a real and true revival. God’s revivals, while they are attended with a great heat and warmth of piety, yet have with them knowledge as well as life, understanding as well as power. The revivals that we may consider to have been genuine were such as those worked by the instrumentality of such men as Jonathan Edwards in America and Whitfield in this country, who preached a Free Grace Gospel in all its fullness.

Such revivals I consider to be genuine and such revivals, I repeat again, would be a benefit to any Church under Heaven. There is no Church, however good it is, which might not be better. And there are many Churches sunken so low, that they have abundant need—if they would prevent spiritual death—to cry aloud, “Lord, revive us.”

Among the blessings of the revival of Christians, we commence, by noticing the salvation of sinners. When God is pleased to pour out His Spirit upon a Church in a larger measure than usual, it is always accompanied by the salvation of souls. And oh, this is a weighty matter, to have souls saved. Some laugh and think the salvation of the soul is nothing, but I trust, Beloved, you know so much of the value of souls that you will ever think it to be worth the laying down of your lives, if you might but be the means of the saving of one single soul from death.

The saving of souls, if a man has once gained love to perishing sinners and love to his blessed Master, will be an all-absorbing passion to him. It will so carry him away, that he will almost forget himself in the saving of others. He will be like the stout, brave fireman, who cares not for the scorch or for the heat, so that he may rescue the poor creature on whom true humanity has set his heart. He must, he will pluck such a one from the burning, at any cost and expense to himself.

Oh the zeal of such a man as that Whitfield to whom I have alluded! He says in one of his sermons, “My God, I groan day-by-day over the salvation of souls. Sometimes,” he says, “I think I could stand on the top of every hackney-coach in the streets of London, to preach God’s Word. It is not enough that I can do it night and day, laboring incessantly by writing and by preaching—I would that I were multiplied a thousand-fold—that I might have a thousand tongues to preach this Gospel of my blessed Redeemer.”

Ah, you find, too, many Christians who do not care about sinners being saved. The minister may preach, but what heed they the results? So long as he has a respectable congregation and a quiet people, it is enough. I trust, my Friends, we shall never sink to so low a state as to carry on our services without the salvation of souls. I have prayed to my God many a time and I hope to repeat the prayer, that when I have no more souls to save for Him, no more of His elect to be gathered home, He may allow me to be taken to Himself, that I may not stand as cumber ground in His vineyard, useless, seeing there is no more fruit to be brought forth.

I know you long for souls to be converted. I have seen your glad eyes when, at the Church meetings, night after night, sinners have told us what the Lord has done for them. I have marked your great joy when drunkards, blasphemers, and all kinds of careless persons have turned with full purpose of heart unto God and led a new life. Now, mark you, if these things are to be continued, and above all, if they are to be multiplied—we must have again a revival in our midst. For this we must and will cry, “O Lord our God, visit Your plantation and pour out again upon us Your mighty Spirit.”

Another effect of a revival in a Church is generally the promotion of true love and unanimity in its midst. I will show you the most quarrelsome Churches in England, if you will show me the most lazy Churches. It has actually become a proverb nowadays. People say, when persons are sound asleep, “He is as sound asleep as a Church”—as if they really thought the Church was the soundest asleep of anything that exists! Alas that there should be so much truth in the proverb. Where a firm, established for business would have all its eyes open—where a company, that had for its object the accumulation of wealth, would be ever on the watch— Churches, for the most part—seem to neglect the means of doing good and fritter away holy opportunities of advancing their Master’s cause. And for this reason, many of us are split in sunder.

There are heart-burnings, aching, rankling of soul, quarrellings among each other. An active Church will be a united Church. A slumbering Church will be sure to be a quarrelsome one. If any minister desires to heal the wounds of a Church and bring the members into unanimity, let him ask God to give them all enough to fill their hands and when their hands are full of their Master’s work and their mouths are full of His praise, they will have no time for devouring one another, or filling their mouths with slander and reproach. Oh, if God gives us revival, we shall have perfect unanimity!

Blessed be God, we have much of it. But oh for more of it that our hearts may be knit together as the heart of one man—that we, being one army of the Living God, may none of us have any anger or ill-will towards each other, but being—as I trust we all are—Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, we may live as becomes such. Oh that Christ would give us that spirit that loves all, hopes for all and will bear burdens for all— passing by little things and differences of judgment and opinion—that so we may be united with a three-fold cord that cannot be broken. A revival, I think, is necessary for the unanimity of the Church.  
A revival is also necessary in order that the mouths of the enemy of the

Truth of God may be stopped. Do they not open wide their mouths against us? Have they not spoken hard things against us? Yes, and not only against us, but against the Truth of God we preach and against the God we honor. How shall their mouths be stopped? By our replying to them? No—foul scorn we think it to utter one single word in our own defense. If our conduct is not sufficiently upright to commend itself, we will not utter words in order to commend it. But the way we can shut our adversaries’ mouths is this—by seeking a revival in our midst. What? Do they rail against our ministry? If more souls are saved, can they rail against that? Yes, let them, if they will.

Do they speak against the doctrines? Let them. But let our lives be so holy that they must lie against us when they dare to say that our doctrines lead any into sin. Let us seek of God that we may be so earnest, so eminently holy, so God-like and so Christ-like, that to all they say their own consciences may tell them, “You utter a falsehood while you speak against him.” This was the glory of the Puritans—they preached doctrines which laid them open to reproach. I am bold to say I have preached the doctrine of the Puritans and I am bold to say, moreover, that those parts which have been most objected to in my discourses, have frequently been quotations from ancient fathers, or from some of the Puritans. I have often smiled when I have seen them condemned and said, “There now, Sir, you have condemned Charnock, or Bunyan, or Howe, or Doddridge,” or some other saint of God whom it so happened I quoted at the time.

The word condemned was theirs and therefore it did not so much affect me. They were held up to reproach when they were alive and how did they answer their calumniators? By a blameless and holy life. They, like Enoch, walked with God. And let the world say what they would of them, they only sought to keep their families the most rigidly pious and themselves the most strictly upright in the world. So that while it was said of their enemies, “They talk of good works,” it was said of the Puritans, that “They did them.” And while the Arminians, for such they were in those days, were living in sin, he who was called Calvinist and laughed at, was living in righteousness and the doctrine that was said to be the promoter of sin was found afterwards to be the promoter of holiness.

We defy the world to find a holier people than those who have espoused the doctrines of Free Grace, from the first moment until now. They have been distinguished in every history, even by their enemies, as having been the most devotedly pious and as having given themselves especially to the reading of God’s Word and the practice of His Law. And while they said they were justified by faith alone, through the blood of Christ—none were found, so much as they—seeking to honor God in all the exercises of godliness, being “a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Let us follow their faith, and let us emulate their charity.

Let us seek a revival here. And so our enemies’ mouths, if not entirely shut, shall be so far stopped that their consciences shall speak against them while they rail against us. We want no eminent reply to silence their calumny—no learned articles brought out in our vindication—no voice lifted up in our favor. I thank my Friends for all they do. But I thank them little for the true effect it produces. Let us live straight on. Let us work straight on. Let us preach straight on and serve our God better than before. Then let Hell roar and earth resound with tumult—the conscious integrity of our own spirit shall preserve us from alarm and the Most High Himself shall protect us from their fury. We need a revival, then, for these three reasons, each of which is great in itself.

Yet, above all, we want a revival, if we would promote the glory of God. The proper object of a Christian’s life is God’s glory. The Church was made on purpose to glorify God. But it is only a revived Church that brings glory to His name. Think you that all the Churches honor God? I tell you, no. There are some that dishonor Him—not because of their erroneous doctrines, nor perhaps because of any defect in their formalities—but because of the want of life in their religion. There is a meeting for prayer—six people assemble besides the minister. Does that proclaim your homage to God? Does that do honor to Christianity? Go to the homes of these people—see what is their conversation when they are alone. Mark how they walk before God. Go to their sanctuaries and hear their hymns, there is the beauty of music, but where is the life of the people? Listen to the sermon—it is elaborate, polished, complete—a masterpiece of oratory.

But ask yourselves, “Could a soul be saved under it, except by a miracle? Was there anything in it adapted to stir men up to goodness? It pleased their ears. It instructed them in some degree, perhaps, but what was there in it to teach their hearts?” Ah, God knows there are many such preachers. Notwithstanding their learning and their opulence, they do not preach the Gospel in its simplicity and they draw not near to God our Father. If we would honor God by the Church, we must have a warm Church, a burning Church, loving the truths it holds and carrying them out in life. Oh that God would give us life from on high, lest we should be like that Church of old of whom it was said, “You have a name to live and are dead.” These are some of the benefits of revivals.

II. WHAT ARE THE MEANS OF REVIVAL? They are two-fold. One is, “Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts,” and the other is, “Cause Your face to shine.” There can be no revival without both of these. Allow me, my dear Hearers, to address you one by one, in different classes, in order that I may apply the former of these means to you.

“Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts.” Your minister feels that he needs to be turned more thoroughly to the Lord his God. His prayer shall be, God helping him, that he may be more fearless and faithful than ever. That he may never for one moment think what any of you will say with regard to what he utters, but that he may only think what God his Master would say concerning him—that he may come into the pulpit with this resolve—that he cares no more for your opinion with regard to the Truth of God than if you were all stones, only resolving this much—come loss or come gain by it—whatsoever the Lord God says unto him, that he must speak.

And he desires to ask his Master that he may come here with more prayer, himself, than before, that whatever he preaches may be so burnt into his own soul that you may all know, even if you do not think it true yourselves, that at any rate he believes it and believes it with his inmost soul. And I will ask of God that I may so preach to you that my words may be attended with a mighty and a Divine power. I do forswear all pretense to ability in this work. I forswear the least idea that I have anything about me that can save souls—or anything which could draw men by the attractions of my speech. I feel that if you have been profited by my preaching, it must have been the work of God, and God alone, and I pray to Him that I may be taught to know more my own weakness. Wherein my enemies say anything against me, may I believe what they say, but yet exclaim—

*“Weak though I am,  
Yet through His might,  
I all things can perform.”*

Will you ask such things for me—that I may be more and more turned to God—and that so your spiritual health may be promoted?

But there are some of you who are workers in the Church. Large numbers are actively engaged for Christ. In the Sabbath-School, in the distribution of tracts, in preaching the Word in the villages and in some parts of this great city—many of you are striving to serve God. Now what I ask and exhort you to is this—cry unto God—“Turn us again, O God.” You want, my dear working Friends, more of the Spirit of God in all your labors. I am afraid we forget Him too much, we want to have a greater remembrance of Him. Sunday-School teachers, cry unto God that you may attend your classes with a sincere desire to promote God’s glory, leaning wholly on His strength. Do not be content with the ordinary routine, gathering your children there and sending them home again—but cry, “Lord, give us the agony which a teacher ought to feel for his child’s soul.” Ask that you may go to the school with deep feelings, with throes of love over the children’s hearts, that you may teach them with tearful eyes, groaning before Heaven that you may be the means of their salvation and deliverance from death.

And you, who in other ways, serve God, I beseech you do not be content with doing it as you have done. You may have done it well enough to gain some approval of your fellows—do it better, as in the sight of the Lord. I do not mean better as to the outward form, but better as to the inward grace that goes with it. Oh, seek from God that your works may be done from pure motives, with more simple faith in Christ, more firm reliance on Him and with greater prayer for your success. “Turn us again,” is the cry of all, I hope, who are doing anything for Jesus.

Others of you are intercessors. And here I hope I have taken in all who love the Lord in this place. Oh, how much the strength of a Church depends upon these intercessors! I almost said we could do better without the workers than the intercessors. We want in every Church, if it is to be successful, intercessors with God—men who know how to plead with Him and to prevail. Beloved, I must stir you up again on this point. If you would see great things done in this place, or in any other place, in the salvation of souls—you must intercede more earnestly than you have done. I thank God our Prayer Meetings are always full.

But there are some of you whom I do not see so often as I would desire. There are some of you business-men who are accustomed to come in for the last half-hour and I have seen you and called on you to pray. For six months I have not seen some of you at all. There are others whom I know to be as much engaged as you are, who somehow or other manage to be always here. Why is it not so with you? If you do not love prayer, then I wish you not to come until you do. But I do ask of God to bring you into such a state of mind that your soul may be more thoroughly with the Lord’s Church and you may be more thoroughly devoted to His service. Our Prayer Meeting is well attended and is full, but it shall be better attended yet, and we shall have the men among us coming up, “to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

We do want more prayer. Your prayers, I am sure, have been more earnest at home than ever they were, during the last three weeks. Let them be more earnest still. It is by prayer we must lean on God. It is by prayer that God strengthens us. I beseech you, wrestle with God, my dear Friends. I know your love to one another and to His Truth. Wrestle with God, in secret and in public, that He would yet open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing upon us—such as we shall not have room enough to receive. There must be a turning again to God of the intercessors in prayer.

Again—we want a turning again to God of all of you who have been accustomed to hold communion with Jesus, but who have in the least degree broken off that holy and heavenly habit. Beloved, are there not some of you who were accustomed to walks with God each day? Your morn was sanctified with prayer and your eventide was closed in with the voice of praise. You walked with Jesus in your daily business. You were real Enochs, you were Johns—you did lay your head on the bosom of your Lord. But ah, have not some of you known suspended communion of late? Let us speak of ourselves personally, instead of addressing you—have not we ourselves held less communion with Jesus? Have not our prayers been fewer to Him and His revelations less bright to us? Have we not been content to live without Emmanuel in our hearts?

How long is it with some of us since our morsel was dipped in the honey of fellowship? With some of you it is weeks and months, since you had your love visit from Jesus. Oh, Beloved, let me beseech you, cry unto God, “Turn us again.” It will never do for us to live without communion. We cannot, we must not, we dare not live without constant hourly fellowship with Jesus. I would stir you up in this matter. Seek of God that you may return and experience the loveliness of Jesus in your eyes—that you may know more and more of your loveliness in His eyes.

And once more, Beloved, “Turn us again,” must be the prayer of all you, not only in your religious labors, but in your daily lives. Oh, how I do groan over each one of you, especially those of you who are my children in Christ—whom God has granted me to be the means of bringing from nature’s darkness into marvelous light—that your lives may be an honor to your profession. Oh, my dear Hearers, may none among you who make a profession, be found liars to God and man. There are many who have been baptized, who have been baptized into the waters of deception—there are some who put the sacramental wine between their lips, who are a dishonor and a disgrace to the Church in which they assemble.

Some who sing praises with us here can go and sing the songs of Satan elsewhere. Yes, are there not some among you, whom I cannot detect, whom the deacons cannot, nor your fellow members either—but whose consciences tell you, you are not fit to be members of a Church? You have crept into our number, you have deceived us and there you are—like a cancer in our midst. God forgive you and change your hearts. God turn you to Himself!

And oh, my Brethren, one and all of us, though we hope we have the root of the matter in us, yet how much room there is for improvement and amendment! How are your families conducted? Is there as much of that true and earnest prayerfulness for your children as we could desire? How is your business conducted? Are you above the tricks of the trade? Do you know how to stand aloof from the common customs of other men and say, “If all do wrong it is no reason why I should—I must, I will do right”? Do you know how to talk? Have you caught the brogue of Heaven? Can you eschew all foolishness, all filthy conversation and seek to bear the image of Jesus Christ in the world? I do not ask you whether you use the “thou” and “thee,” and the outward formalities of ostentatious humility—but I ask you whether you know how to regulate your speech by the Word of God. I trust, in some degree, that you all do but not as we could desire.

Cry out, then, you Christians, “Turn us again, O God!” If others sin, I beseech you, do not you sin, remember how God is dishonored by it. What? Will you bring shame on Christ and on the doctrines we profess? There is enough said against them without our giving cause of offense. Lies enough are made up, without our giving any reason that men should truthfully speak ill of us. Oh, if I thought it would avail, methinks I would go down upon my knees, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, to beg of you, as for my very life, that you would live close to Jesus. I do pray the Holy Spirit that He may so rest on you in every place, that your conversation may be “such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.” And that in every act, great or small—and in every word of every sort, there may be the influence from on near—molding you to the right, keeping you to the right—and in everything bidding you to become more and more patterns of godliness and reflections of the image of Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends, to be personal with each other again—are we where we want to be just now, many of us? Can we put our hands to our hearts and say, “O Lord, I am, in spiritual things just where I desire to be”? No, I don’t think there is one of us that could say that. Are we now what we should desire to be if we were to die in our pews? Come now, have we so lived during the past week, that we could wish this week to be a specimen-week of our whole lives? I fear not. Brethren, how are your evidences? Are they bright for Heaven? How is your heart? Is it wholly set on Jesus? How is your faith? Does it dwell on God alone? Is your soul sick, or is it healthy?

Are you sending forth blossoms and bearing fruit, or do you feel dry and barren? Remember, blessed is the man who is planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season. But how about yourselves? Are not some of you so cold and languid in prayer, that prayer is a burden to you? How about your trials? Do they not break your heart more, almost, than ever they did? That is because you have forgotten how to cast your burden on the Lord. How about your daily life? Have you not cause to grieve over it, as not being all you could desire it? Ah, Beloved, do not reckon it a light matter to be going backwards—do not consider it a small thing to be less zealous than you used to be. Ah, it is a sad thing to begin to decline. But how many of you have done so! Let our prayer be now— “Lord, revive us, Lord, revive us, all our help must come from You.”

Do, I beseech you, I entreat you—in the name of God our Father and Jesus Christ our Brother—search your hearts, examine yourselves and put up this prayer, “Lord, wherein I am right, keep me so, against all opposition and conflict. But wherein I am wrong, Lord make me right, for Jesus’ sake.” We must have this turning again unto God, if we would have a revival in our breast. Every unholy life, every cold heart, everyone who is not entirely devoted to God, keeps us back from having a revival. When once we have all our souls fully turned unto the Lord, then, I say, but not till then, He will give us to see the travail of the Redeemer’s soul and, “God, even our own God shall bless us and all the ends of the world shall fear Him.”

The other means of revival is a precious one—“cause Your face to shine.” Ah, Beloved, we might ask of God that we might all be devoted—all His servants, all prayerful and all what we want to be. But it would never come without this second prayer being answered. And even if it did come without this, where would be the blessing? It is the causing of His face to shine on His Church that makes a Church flourish. Do you suppose that, if to our number there were added a thousand of the most wealthy and wise of the land, we should really prosper any the more without the light of God’s countenance? Ah, no, Beloved, give us our God and we could do without them, but they would be a curse to us without Him.

Do you imagine that the increase of our numbers is a blessing, unless we have an increase of grace? No, it is not. It is the crowding of a boat until it sinks, without putting in any more provision, for the food of those who are in it. The more we have in numbers, the more we need have of grace. It is just this we want every day—“Cause Your face to shine.” Oh, there have been times in this House of Prayer, when God’s face has shone upon us! I can remember seasons, when everyone of us wept, from the minister down almost to the child. There have been times when we have reckoned the converts under one sermon by scores. Where is the blessedness we once spoke of? Where is the joy we once had in this house? Brethren, it is not all gone. There are many still brought to know the

Lord. But oh, I want to see those times again, when first the refreshing showers came down from Heaven. Have you ever heard that under one of Whitfield’s sermons there have been as many as two thousand saved? He was a great man. But God can use the little, as well as the great to produce the same effect. And why should there not be souls saved here, beyond all our dreams? Yes, why not? We answer—there is no reason why not—if God does but cause His face to shine. Give us the shining of God’s face—man’s face may be covered with frowns and his heart may be black with malice—but if the Lord our God does shine, it is enough—

*“If He makes bare His arm,  
Who can His cause withstand?  
When He His people’s cause defends  
Who, who can stay His hand?”*

It is His good hand with us we want. I think there is an opportunity for the display of God’s hand at this particular era, such as has not been for many years before. Certainly, if He does anything, the crown must be put on His head and on His head, alone. We are a feeble people—what shall we do? But if He does anything, He shall have the crown and the diadem entirely to Himself. Oh that He would do it! Oh that He would honor Himself! Oh that He would turn unto us that we might turn unto Him and that His face may shine! Children of God, I need not enlarge on the meaning of this. You know what the shining of God’s face means—you know it means a clear light of knowledge, a warming light of comfort, a living light poured into the darkness of your soul, an honorable light, which shall make you appear like Moses, when he came from the mountain—so bright, that men will scarce dare to look upon you. “Cause Your face to shine.”

Shall we not make this our prayer, dearly Beloved? Have I one of my Brethren in the faith, who will not this day go home to cry out aloud unto his God, “Cause Your face to shine”? A black cloud has swept over us—all we want is that the sun should come and it shall sweep that cloud away. There have been direful things. But what of them, if God, our God, shall appear? Let this be our cry, “Cause Your face to shine.” Beloved, let us give no rest unto our God, until he hears this our prayer, “Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause Your face to shine. And we shall be saved.”

III. Come, now, let me stir you all up, all of you who love the Savior, to seek after this revival. Some of you, perhaps, are now resolving in your hearts that you will at once, when you reach your homes, prostrate yourselves before your God and cry out to Him that He would bless His Church. And oh, do so, I beseech you. It is common with us under a sermon to resolve, though after the sermon we are slow to perform. You have often said, when you left the House of God, “I will carry out that injunction of my pastor and will be much in prayer.” You thought to do it so soon as you arrived at home, but you did not, and so there was an untimely end of the matter—it accomplished not what was designed.

But this time, I beseech you, while you resolve, be resolute. Instead of saying within yourselves, “Now I will devote myself more to God and seek to honor Him more,” anticipate the resolution by the result. You can do more in the strength of God than you can think or propose to yourselves in the utmost might of man. Resolves may pacify the conscience very frequently for a while, without really benefiting it. You say you will do it, conscience therefore does not reproach you with a disobedience to the command, but you do it not, after all, and so the effect has passed away. Let any holy and pious resolution you now form be this instant turned into prayer. Instead of saying, “I will do it,” put up the prayer, “Lord enable me to do it—Lord, grant me grace to do it.” One prayer is worth ten thousand resolutions. Pray to God that you, as a soldier of the Cross, may never disgrace the banner under which you fight.

Ask of Him that you may not be like the children of Ephraim, who turned back in the day of battle, but that you may stand fast in all weathers, even as good old Jacob, when “in the day the drought consumed him and the frost by night”—so may you serve that God who has galled you with so high a calling. Perhaps others of you think there is no need of a revival, that your own hearts are quite good enough. I hope but few of you think so. But if you do think so, my Hearer, I warn you—you fancy you are right and in it you prove that you are wrong. He who says within himself, “I am rich and increased with goods,” let him know that he is, “poor, and naked, and miserable.” He who says he needs no revival knows not what he says.

Beloved, you shall find that those who are noted as best among God’s people are sometimes not. And those who fancy all goes well in their hearts oftentimes little know that an under-current of evil is really bearing them away as with a tide where they would not wish to go—while they fancy they are going on to peace and prosperity. Oh, Beloved, carry into effect the advice I have just given. I know I have spoken feebly. It is the best I can do just now, I have only stirred you up by way of remembrance. Think not my desires are as feeble as my words—imagine not that my anxiety for you is or can be represented by my speech.

Ask, I beseech you, ask of God, that to everyone of you Brothers and Sisters, the simple exhortation of one who loves you as his own soul, may be blessed. God is my witness, that for Him I seek to live—no other motive have I in this world, God knows, but His glory. Therefore do I bid and exhort you, knowing that you love the same God and seek to serve the same Christ—do not now, in this hour of peril, give the least cause to the enemy to blaspheme. Oh, I entreat you for His sake who hung upon the tree and who is now exalted in Heaven—by His bloody sacrifice offered for your redemption—by the everlasting love of God, whereby you are kept, I exhort, I beseech, I entreat you, as your Brother in Christ Jesus and such an one as your pastor—be in nothing moved by your adversaries. “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for our Savior’s sake.” Pray that your life and conversation may be an honor to your Lord and Master. In nothing give occasion for the enemy to malign our sacred cause—in everything may your course be “like the

shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day.”

But oh, you who come here and approve the Truth of God with your judgment but yet have never felt its power in your hearts or its influence in your lives, for you we sigh and groan. For your sake I have stirred up the saints among us to pray. Oh how many of you there are that have been pricked in your consciences and hearts many a time. You have wept, yes, and have so wept that you have thought with yourselves, “Never souls wept as we have done!” But you have gone back again. After all the solemn warnings you have heard and after all the wooing of Calvary, you have gone back again to your sins.

Sinner! You who heed little for yourself, just hear how much we think of you. Little do you know how much we groan over your soul. Man! You think your soul worthless, yet morning, noon and night we are groaning over that precious immortal thing which you despise. You think it little to lose your soul, to perish, or perhaps to be damned. Do you account us fools that we should cry over you? Do you suppose we are bereft of reason that we should think your soul of so much concern, while you have so little concern for it?

Here are God’s people—they are crying after your soul. They are laboring with God to save you. Do you think so little of it yourself, that you would fool away your soul for a paltry pleasure, or would procrastinate your soul’s welfare beyond the limited domain of hope? Oh, Sinner, Sinner, if you love yourself, I beseech you, pause and think that what God’s people love must be worth something. That what we labor for and strive for must be worth something. That what was reckoned worth a ransom so priceless as Jesus paid must have its sterling value in the sight of Heaven.

Do I beseech you? Pause! Think of the value of your soul. Think how dreadful it will be if it is lost. Think of the extent of eternity. Think of your own frailty. Consider your own sin and of what you deserve. May God give you grace to forsake your wicked ways! Turn unto Him and live, for He “has no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but rather that he should turn unto Him and live!” Therefore, says He, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?”

And now, O Lord God of Hosts, hear our ardent appeal to Your throne. “Turn us again.” Lighten our path with the guidance of Your eye, cheer our hearts with the smiles of Your face. O God of Armies, let every regiment and rank of Your militant Church be of perfect heart, undivided in Your service. Let great grace rest upon all Your children. Let great fear come upon all the people. Let many reluctant hearts be turned to the Lord. Let there now be times of refreshing from Your Presence. To Your own name shall be all the glory, “O You that are more glorious and excellent then the mountains of prey!” Amen.

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OPENING THE MOUTH

NO. 1221

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”  
Psalm 81:10.

SOME have considered that our text contains an allusion to a singular custom of showing favor which has been occasionally adopted by Eastern monarchs. It is not a very long time ago that a former Shah of Persia bade an ambassador, who was in great favor with him, open his mouth, and when he had done so the monarch filled it with pearls and gems of great value which, of course, were a present to him. This certainly affords an illustration of the text, even if the passage contains no allusion to it. If we will but open the mouth of our desire, God will give to us mercies infinitely more precious than the rarest gems.

I guarantee you that if any emperor or king should bid us open our mouths that we might have them filled with diamonds, we should be very sure to extend them to their largest possible capacity and, therefore, this custom may serve as a good enforcement of the text. Open your mouth wide, for God will not fill it with secondary things, but will satisfy you with Divine mercies of exceeding preciousness. I think, however, that the illustration which we have mentioned is far fetched and I seldom like an explanation of a passage of Scripture which demands the introduction of a very rare incident. Illustrations are used in Scripture not to perplex us, but to render the teaching more clear.

We will, therefore, look to some more common act of Eastern life for the explanatory allusion. Those who have been at the tables of the Orientals know that there is another very common custom which meets the case. The host, when you are at supper, will take the fattest portions of the lamb, if that happens to be the meat, and he will apportion them to you. He may even take up the fattest and choicest morsels in his hand and, asking you to open your mouth, he will place them in it. This is a common practice of the country and lies at the bottom of many a Scriptural expression. “Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.” “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips,” and a great many other texts which I might quote, all allude to that custom.

A man greatly beloved would be asked to open his mouth wide that he might receive a very large portion of the dainties before him. I confess, however, that I am not much enamored with even this simile. I believe it to be a valuable side light, but I had rather, after all, look to Nature for an illustration than dwell upon a custom which is purely Oriental and is hardly relished by our Western delicacy. Come with me, then, to the woods, where the songsters of the grove have built their habitations. Look at the little birds in the nest, for there you have the text! They are newly

hatched and unable to feed themselves and, therefore, they are wholly dependent upon the parent birds.

When I have peered into their abode, they seemed, to me, to be all mouth and beak, with but faint trace of wings! If you put out your finger, or dangle a worm near them, no feature strikes you but those gaping ravenous mouths! When the mother bird brings food she never has to ask the little ones to open their mouths wide—her only difficulty is to fill the great width which they are quite sure to present to her! Appetite and eagerness are never lacking, they are utterly insatiable. If you need my text before your eyes in living realization, only picture a nest of little birds reaching up their mouths and all opening them as wide as they can.

Instead of the poor little mother bird that has been hard at work to gather a scanty portion for one of them, you have an infinite God filling all open mouths and bidding them open again, for He is able to fill them, however many they may be, or however vast their needs! It is that great Lord of ours of whom it is written, “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust,” who now speaks to us, as little birds, and says, “Open your mouths wide, for I will fill them.” That is, at any rate, a pleasing illustration of the test, even if it is not the exact idea which was in the Psalmist’s mind. The text divides itself into the exhortation and the promise.

I. The exhortation is, “OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE.” How are we to do this? The precept relates to prayer and desire and the like. But there is also an exhortation to labor after a great sense of need. For what makes a bird open its mouth wide but its hunger? The young ravens cry because they need food and nobody will ever open his mouth wide for spiritual blessings until he has a very deep and solemn sense of his need before God. You sinners will never pray till you know you need something—why should you? All the prayers offered by people who have no needs are so much vain complimenting of God. If you have no sense of need how can you pray?

Would you knock at the door of charity and then tell the good man of the house that you require nothing of him? Is not that man an arrant trifler who rings the surgery bell but tells the surgeon that he has nothing the matter with him and does not need his care? Prayers that are not based upon a sense of need are mockeries. And I say this to Christians, too. You never pray, Brothers and Sisters, except when you are in need— and rest assured when you think you have no more needs you have lost the strongest motive for prayer and the main element of power in it. You may feel, at times, that there is little to request on your own account and you may rejoice that the Lord has filled you to the full for the time being, but then there are the needs of the Church and of the world—and these should press upon your heart as if they were your own.

You cannot pray without a sense of need, it is out of the question. The man who comes to you begging because he has not a night’s lodging, or has not broken his fast all day, how well he begs! You do not need to send him to school to learn the art of begging—his hungry belly makes him eloquent! And so, when a man feels he must have heavenly blessings or be lost. Or when he feels that, being saved, he must still be kept by daily Grace, or else he will start aside. Or when he feels that his work of faith and labor of love will be good for nothing without the Divine blessing. Or when he feels that the Church must have the anointing of the Holy One and that the world needs a visitation from God—when any of these needs solemnly weigh upon his soul—then it is that he prays! The man does not open his mouth wide till he is conscious of a great need, which only the Lord, Himself, can supply.

I exhort you, therefore, dear Brethren, to shake off the idea of being rich and increased in goods, and having need of nothing, for this proud notion will strangle prayer! You are weakness itself and emptiness itself— and a mass of sin and misery—apart from God your Father, and Christ your Redeemer, and the Spirit the Indweller! And when you know this, then you will open your mouth wide. Airy notions about having reached a higher life and being perfect will make fine gentlemen of you, but will spoil you for being beggars at the Mercy Seat. The mouth of dire necessity, God always fills, but pride has short results, for is it not one of the proverbs of His kingdom, “He has filled the hungry with good things; but the rich He has sent empty away”?

Then, dear Friends, next seek after an intense and vehement desire, for the mouth is opened wide only when the desire becomes intense. You know how David says, “I opened my mouth and panted.” You have seen a dog after a long run, how he stands with opened mouth panting for life and breath. Oh, that we had desires after God and Divine things strong enough to make us thus open our mouth and pant! We may never have seen a stag in extremis, but I dare say David had. He had seen it in the fierce hunt when it longed to have its smoking sides in the water brooks and to drink long draughts, and he said, “As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God.”

Nothing puts such energy into prayer as intense anguish of desire. Desire comes out of a sense of need and in proportion as the necessity is overwhelming, the fervency of the desire will be vehement. My Brothers and Sisters, we have not, because, although we ask, we use a kind of asking which is as though we asked not! An old Puritan says, “He that prays to God without fervor asks to be denied.” There is a way of asking for a thing in which the person to whom the request is made finds it very easy to decline the request. But persons in dire need understand how to put their case so that only a very hard-hearted person could say, “no.” They know how to place their petition in such a way that the request wins, not merely because of the rightness of the petition, but also because of the very style in which it is put.

We must learn how to pray with strong cries and tears, for there are mercies which cannot be gained by any other mode of supplicating. Did you ever try your little child by holding fast in your hand something that he wanted? You wished to see whether he had perseverance enough to pull open your fingers, one by one, to get what he wished for. And you have shut your hand very tightly and tried his endeavors so long that at last you have seen the big round tears stand in his eyes—and then you

have held out no longer. The tears open your hand!

I believe that our heavenly Father exercises us in that manner at times until He gets us right down to this—that we must have it and we shall die if we do not have it because it is for His Glory—and we have His promise for it. When we come to that point we are where the Lord meant us to be! And having brought us there, He gives us our desire, having already doubled the blessing by stirring us up to vehemence. Open your mouth wide, Man! Do not play at praying! Nobody is saved between sleeping and waking—and nobody wins rich blessings by being lukewarm. I have heard mothers say of a child that, “he cried all over,” and that is the right way to pray! Let your whole man wrestle with the Most High. “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

Deep necessity and urgent desire are two great openers of the mouth in prayer. To my mind the pith of the text may be compressed into such words as these—Ask for large things. Do not restrict your requests and pray with bated breath, but plead with the great God for great things, such as it will be to His Glory to bestow. In this point we too often fail. I remember praying before I preached in a certain provincial town and asking the Lord that He would enable at least one poor soul to lay hold on Christ.

I went home to tea with a very worthy Brother, and a fine old Christian gentleman at the tea table said to me very kindly, “I do not know what you did with your faith this afternoon when you were praying, for you asked the Lord to give you one soul, but the sermon was such that I saw no reason why it should not be blessed to a thousand. I could not say, ‘Amen,’ to such a very narrow prayer as that. Why,” said he, “Man alive! With such a Gospel as you were preaching, and such a crowd of people, you might as well have asked for a thousand souls as one.” I thought so, too, and confessed the poverty of my prayer.

Brethren, many of us have made great mistakes and have shut ourselves up in the cells of poverty when our feet might have stood in a large room! We have laid down pipes too small to bring us a full current of blessing. We have half-killed our prayers by lacing them too tight, even as foolish mothers kill their daughters. Our cup is small and we blame the fountain! The Israelites, according to this Psalm, did not believe in God as they should. They did not expect their enemies to be driven out, nor hope to be fed with the finest of the wheat. They thought their God was a commonplace God, like the gods of Egypt. They did not know what a rich, generous, great-hearted, large-giving God He is and so they failed in asking and, therefore, they did not obtain the richest blessings of Grace. Christians should elevate the scale of their praying and enlarge their requests and never let it be said that they lose blessings solely by failing to ask for them.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we may well ask great things, for we are asking of a great God who fills immensity, who has all power, who has all blessings in His stores! If we were to ask Him for a world, it is no more for Him to bestow a world than it would be for us to give away a crumb! When the poor widow gave her two mites she gave her all and knowing her poverty, one would ask very little of her and expect even less! But when you ask of a king you do not expect two mites from him! That poor woman who said, “Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table,” was far nearer the mark than most of us, for much as she valued the inestimable blessing which she sought, she reckoned it as being

 nothing more than a crumb as it came from God!

The greatest blessings which can yet be received through Jesus Christ, though we cannot prize them enough and they are beyond all calculation, precious, are little in comparison with the unspeakable gift of His Son, which has already been bestowed! Open your mouth wide, for wide are the supplies of love, and boundless the riches of the Sovereign Grace of so great a God! Besides His greatness, remember His goodness. The good Lord delights to give—it does not diminish His possessions, but affords Him satisfaction. The sun is just as bright, notwithstanding all his shining, as if he had stored up his light. It is the sun’s nature to shine and it may as well shine upon us as anywhere else! And it is God’s delight to distribute His goodness and bless His creatures—and therefore we may well ask large things from One whose very nature it is to scatter His fullness among the poor and needy.

Remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, what He has already done for us. “I am the Lord your God, which brought you up out of Egypt,” says He, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” See what He has done! Is it a trifle to have had all your sins forgiven, to have received a new heart and a right spirit, to have been saved by the precious blood of His dear Son? If we made our prayers to scale, if they were proportioned to the measure of God’s past favors, what great prayers they would be! I love a Gospel on a grand scale. I cannot bear to see anything about it lowered, or cut down—not even the terrors of it. I am certain that those who make out the punishment of the wicked to be upon a smaller scale, must, before long, diminish the Glory of the Atonement and bring down their conceptions of God, Himself, for they are all proportioned.

But you and I, who see everything to be grand, vast, infinite, ought to open our mouths wide, to keep our praying somewhat proportionate to the condition of things around us. Remember, beloved Brothers and Sisters, what great pleas you have to urge when you come before God. Your main argument is the gift of His dear Son. Now, if you pray according to that plea, you will have this consideration to support you—“He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things”? What a word is that—“all things”! Your prayers cannot outrun those comprehensive words—“all things.” Should you not open your mouth wide? Would you employ before God the magnificent plea of the atoning blood and then come down to ask for pence and halfpence, when you might as well have countless riches?

Will you ask for enough Grace to keep you out of Hell, when you might have Grace enough to make you habitually in the suburbs of Heaven? Will you ask to be useful to two or three, when you might, with the same plea, prevail to be a spiritual benefactor to hundreds and thousands? He deserves to be poor who has no desire to be rich and will not even take

the trouble to ask for wealth. He who will not so much as open his mouth must expect no pity should he starve. Oh, Beloved, do not pinch yourselves, but ask the largest conceivable blessings! Spread your most capacious net, for the multitude of fish will fill it! Dig the deepest pools, for the rain will brim them! Bring forth all your empty vessels, for the oil shall be multiplied till all are overflowing.

Beloved, let us ask great things for ourselves. I do not mean let us ask great temporal blessings—we may leave everything of that kind with God and this is the limit He puts to such prayer—“Give us day by day our daily bread.” Having food and raiment let us be content. But as for spiritual things, ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. Here the treasury has neither lock nor key! The lid is taken off from the jewelry box—help yourself—and if you are straitened you are not straitened in God, you are straitened in your own heart! I beseech you, young Christians, do not be satisfied with getting as much Grace as the people you live with, who profess to be Christians, for there are hosts of them that I would not like to risk my soul with.

I am not their judge, but I think, I think it will be an extraordinary thing if they get into Heaven. I know some very loud-mouthed talkers whose actions are not pretty at all, and the less said about them the better. I mean some professors when I speak thus. I mean members of Churches. Now, do not you young people make them your standard—get far beyond them! Outstrip the ordinary run of Christians who are consistent and no more. I would urge you to seek far higher things than they possess. They are said to be “consistent,” though I do not know what they are consistent with. They do nothing that is grossly wrong and they are good, ordinary, respectable people, but as to joy in the Lord and being filled with the Holy Spirit, and real faith—daring faith, love and zeal for God’s Glory—and agony for the conversion of souls, why, large numbers of very consistent people know nothing about these things except when they read about them in the Bible!

Surely their condition is more consistent with membership in Laodicea than in the New Jerusalem! Their consistency is not consistency with the Divine will, but a miserable consistency with their own dead-and-alive profession. Oh, you that are beginners in the Divine Life, I pray you be not as your fathers! Do not take any of us for a standard. We are a goodfor-nothing generation, taking us all round, and there had need be a far better race springing up that shall really believe and act upon their faith! We need a generation who will so live unto God with a more intense, strong and mighty life than most of us have ever realized. Open your mouth wide, young Christian, for a large measure of the Holy Spirit and for a mighty fullness of the life of God, that it may be in you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

Open your mouths wide, dear Friends, and ask great things for the Church. The Church of God, I hope, is in a better condition than she was some years ago, but we have not yet learned what it is to believe in great works being done for God. There are still Churches, which if they were to have half-a-dozen added to them in a year, would be intensely satisfied, if not overjoyed, instead of calling for prayer and fasting and humiliation because so few are brought to Christ. There are Church members around us who do not believe in many people being converted at once. If the Gospel were preached so that a dozen were brought in at one time, they would impute it to undue excitement and doubt its being the work of the Spirit of God, though we have the New Testament and the Acts of the Apostles, especially, to lead us to expect such things.

There are Churches to which, if God were to send a hundred converts at once, they would not receive them, but would put them through a rigid quarantine! And you may be sure our heavenly Father will not send His new-born babes to places where they will not be cheerfully admitted! There are certain Churches whose modes of testing and trying are such that the young lambs would be torn to bits before they would get into the green pastures—and there would hardly be two legs and a piece of an ear left after they had passed the examination—the Good Shepherd will not send His lambs where such a tribe of wolves stand gaping for prey. Pray for the Church, that she may have greater faith in her God, greater belief in the Gospel which she preaches, greater closeness of walk with Jesus, greater care to obey her Master’s precepts—and then you may open your mouth wide and expect to see the kingdom of Christ more fully come.

Open your mouth for this great city. Who can think what a city we live in without desiring to be mighty in prayer for it? At this moment Scotland is a land where religion has mighty influence and I trace it mainly to the prayers of John Knox. His mighty pleading with God anchored Scotland to the Gospel and she cannot get away from it. We have urgent need to pray for England in these evil times. Many are preying upon her, we have need to pray for her. The darkness thickens—among the learned it has blackened into Egyptian night and among the illiterate it is as the valley of the shadow of death. Skepticism is descending upon us like a horrible mist, chilling faith even to the very marrow of our bones. Superstition, like a feverish fog, pollutes the air. We have need to cry to the Lord to do some great work in these days—to smite His enemies upon the cheekbone—and to send forth His power among His friends.

I think I have explained sufficiently that the text means ask great things. But one more remark I must cover, and that is that many of us have need to ask for enlarged capacities. It would be of no use to open your mouth if you could not swallow what was put into it, or if you could not digest it after you had swallowed it. And there are many precious Truths of the Gospel which uninstructed Believers could not digest if they knew them. Therefore there is great need that their minds should be strengthened and fitted to feed upon strong meat. The grand Truths of the Covenant. The Doctrines of Election and Predestination.

The glorious facts of the Immutable Love of God and the indissoluble union of the saints with Christ, and their consequent everlasting safety— all these are sublime matters which cannot be appreciated by every novice, but require a spiritually educated mind to enjoy them. Thousands of professors sneer at these eternal Truths because they have not the spiritual digestion which could assimilate such grand soul-feeding meat!

They remind me of little, conceited boys affecting to despise the diet of men because they, themselves, have no taste except for sugar plums and sponge cakes. There are many mercies which persons ask for and if God were to bestow them, they would not know what to do with them! It would be like giving them a white elephant—they would not know where or how to keep it.

Yonder Brother asks for more talent and yet he does not use what he already has! Another Brother begs the Lord to make him successful in his work, but he would be top heavy and proud, and exalted above measure if he were favored with a little success. One man craves that he may know, but his knowledge would puff him up. Another prays that he may feel, but his feelings would drown his faith! If we had more room for the Lord’s gifts, we should receive more. I have half a mind to exhort you to imitate the rich fool and pull down your barns and build greater. He was a fool because he meant to gather a store of wheat and grain of the earth—but if you can build greater barns to hold the precious Grace which comes from Heaven, you will be wise, indeed.

God will not give you what you cannot receive or put to healthy use. But, Oh, pray to Him, “Lord, enlarge my heart, expand my soul and give me a nobler mind free from selfishness, less cramped with ideas of my own consequence! Make me less important, more loving, more careful for the souls of others, more ambitious for Your Glory, more intensely consecrated to Your Word and will.” While self hoards up its treasures there is no room for Divine things! And the surest way for our enlargement is to turn out the vile stuff. Tobiah’s furniture is in the chamber of the house of the Lord and out it must go! Then there will be room for the treasure which the Master bestows.

II. The second head is the promise. “Open your mouth wide, AND I WILL FILL IT.” You might expect such a promise as that. You could not think it possible for the Lord to say, “Open your mouths for nothing.” It would not be according to His usual way of procedure. He does not set His servants praying and then say somewhere behind their backs, “they shall seek My face in vain.” Tantalus belongs to the heathen mythology, not to the Christian’s experience. “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

I gather from this promise, first, that it is a promise only made to those who open their mouths wide. Some Brethren never get their mouths filled because they never open them to any extent. They ask for some little mercy and they may get it, or may not. There is no promise about such shut-mouthed prayers—if they had opened their mouths wide they would have, for sure, had the mouth-filling blessing. With the world, it is the less you ask for, the more likely you will be to obtain it, but God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts. With God, the more you ask, the more likely are you to be heard. Half open your mouth and it may or may not be filled, but, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

We always pray well and successfully when the Spirit of God enables us to stand on elevated ground and plead on godlike terms for blessings which for value, number and greatness are worthy of the infinite bounty of Jehovah. We are then dealing with God as He loves to be dealt with, for He is a rich and great God, and loves to be approached with great prayers and great requests. And when we draw near in that fashion we shall be quite sure to succeed. I would encourage you, dear Brothers and Sisters, who seem to have failed in your supplications, to enquire whether they may not have failed because their requests were too little.

God seems to say to His servant, “You have not asked enough. Come, Man, you are trifling with Me! Here is My Mercy Seat—I am rich, infinitely rich, and willing to give you according to your desires—and you are asking me for mere odds and ends. Do not play with Me in this way! Ask for something which I can feel a pleasure in giving to you—something worthy of a God.” “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Should not this thought greatly strengthen us when next we draw near to God in prayer?

Remember, too, that this is a promise given by One who can fulfill it and will. “Open your month wide, and I will fill it” is a sort of challenge. “See whether you can ask for more than I can give you.” Try whether your faith can outrun your God! See whether you can expect more of God than He will bestow. Take His promise and challenge Him, and see whether He will run back from it. He promises great things and unsearchable, let your soul’s necessities impel you to ask for the greatest conceivable blessings and see whether He will deny you. “Prove Me, now, says the Lord of Hosts, and see.”

Oh, if Israel had been in an experimenting mind, what wonders would they have seen! How would the windows of Heaven have been flung back and Infinite Good been showered down! But they were not in a praying mood. God encouraged them to ask by the favor with which He had surrounded them, for of old He had scattered manna about their habitations, and from the Rock He had drawn forth flowing streams. Thus He seemed to say to them, “Oh, Israel, see how you are surrounded with miracles! Heaven and earth are made subservient to you. Nothing is too hard for Me—I open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the deserts—believe in Me and act according to the scale upon which I am acting to you—and see whether I shall fail in anything.” Even so the Lord puts it to you, dear Brethren, and it is not an empty boast. He is not a man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

Oh, what stories I could tell, here, of my own experience if it did not seem like egotism. When I read, as I continually do, slurs put upon our prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God, and find that it has become a current opinion that there really is no such a thing as an answer to prayer, I feel indignant! Why, Sirs, I am as sure that God hears my prayers as I am certain that you hear me! To me the energy of prayer is as self-evident as the weight of a substance, or the force of a motive power. The law of gravitation I might doubt, but the law that God hears prayer I cannot! The wonder to me is that men should stand up and assert that God does not hear prayer when they cannot be supposed to know everything and dare not claim to have any very special acquaintance with prayer, itself,

such as to qualify them to calculate its results.

Those who deny the efficacy of prayer never pray! No, are not capable of offering prevalent prayer. Why do they speak so positively? What do they know about it? How dare they, as philosophers, speak dogmatically of that which they have never tried? I can say, and I do say it honestly, that hundreds of times, about all sorts of things, I have taken my case to God and have obtained the desire of my heart, or something far better— and that not by mere coincidence, as these objectors assert—but in a manner palpably in reply to my pleadings. There are multitudes of Brothers and Sisters here, who, from their own experience, can bear the same witness!

Yet a fellow gets up who never tried prayer and says it is of no avail! We find it hard to have patience with him. How does he know? He reminds me of the Irish prisoner who was brought up for murder and halfa-dozen people swore that they had seen him do the deed. “Your Lordship,” he said, “I could bring ten times as many that didn’t see me do it.” Yes, but that was no evidence at all! And in the same way, these people have the impudence to set up their theory on no better grounds than the fact that they do not pray and God does not hear them! What is the good of such evidence? We know He would not hear them if they did not pray. When He does hear simple men and women, guiltless persons who, if they were put on the witness stand, would be reckoned to be the best witnesses a court could have—is their witness to go for nothing?

And others of us, whose character, I trust, would bear us through any cross-examination—are we to assert that God has answered our prayers and be prepared to die to prove our sincerity, if need be—and yet be told that men who have not tried it, and say it is not so, are philosophers and are to be believed sooner than we are? We may not be philosophers, but we are honest men and have done nothing to make our testimony unreliable. It is easy to call us fools, but hard names prove nothing but the weakness of those who use them. Take Christians as a rule and they are not less sharp-witted than skeptics. Indeed, even when they have been fanatical, they have seldom said or done such unwise things as skeptical philosophers have propounded and attempted to carry out. However, it little matters what the ungodly say, the foundation of God stands sure.

Oh, Brethren, we will prove the power of prayer more than ever! If we have asked and had, we will ask more and we shall have more. If we have opened our mouths and God has filled them, we will open our mouths wider and obtain a larger blessing. The very best way to put to rout the falsehood of these philosophic atheists is more real prayer—fools are unanswerable. Christian Brethren, look at the promise again. “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it,” and then answer the question—how will the Lord fill our mouth? First, He will fill it with prayers. Do you ever feel as if you could not pray? Do not yield to the feeling, for then is the time to pray! When you cannot pray you must pray. Hold your empty mouth open before God, for the Holy Spirit to put the prayer into it.

I have come away from attempting to pray and felt I did not pray. And the next time I have knelt down I have been very fluent in prayer and yet there was more real prayer in my groaning and sighing and heaving heart when I thought I failed, than there was in the fluency of the second occasion! Open your mouth wide, dear Brothers and Sisters, and God will fill it with petitions of an acceptable kind. The Holy Spirit will give you “groans that cannot be uttered.” No prayer excels that in which the creature feels as if it could not pray and did not pray—and yet the Creator, Himself, strives mightily within!

Then, open your mouth wide and He will fill it with the actual blessings. He will not merely put blessings into your hands, but He will fill your mouth with them. It is one thing to have the cup of blessing in your hand and quite another thing to drink thereof. Many a man possesses what he never enjoys—the fruit on the tree is his own, but its sweet flavor never gladdens his mouth. When the Lord, in love, bestows a blessing, He teaches us how to enjoy it! He gives us the essence of the meat, the soul of the solace, the juice of the vine, the heart of the joy—not merely the legal claim to it but the actual enjoyment of it! This is the cream of the cream, the mercy of the mercy, the filling of the mouth with the promised good.

The Lord will also fill our mouth with praises. Open your mouth wide and God will fill it with songs, with shouts, with gratitude which cannot be expressed in words. Some of us know what it means to have our mouths so full of God’s praises all day long that we have wanted all mankind and all the angels to help us magnify the Lord. Open your mouths wide, then, and God will fill them with prayer, with blessing, and with praise.

In conclusion, is there not very much of rebuke in this to most of us? Parents, have you prayed for the salvation of your children—vehemently and earnestly? All your children? Teachers in the classes, have you expected the conversion of all your children and prayed for it? Preachers of the Gospel, have you looked for many conversions and prayed for them? Brethren who labor for Christ in any capacity, have you expected to see London converted to God and looked for it and worked for it? In Gospel fisheries we generally catch what we fish for. If we fish with a fly we may get one fish, but if we know how to use the great dragnet, by mighty faith we shall take 153 great fishes! And for all that, the net will not be broken! Open your mouth wide, Brothers and Sisters, and be rebuked to think you have not opened it wide before.

But is there not also a word here of consolation to the sinner? “Open your mouth wide,” says God, even to you, “and I will fill it.” What do you need, Sinner? “Well, I want a little comfort.” Do not ask for that, Brother. Ask for the Lord Jesus Christ at once. “Open your mouth wide.” “Oh, I want a little peace. I am so troubled.” Do not ask for that, Brother. Ask for a whole Christ and a perfect salvation now. “I want to feel some measure of impression under this sermon.” Do not pray for that, Sister. Ask God for a new heart and a right spirit outright, and now! “Open your mouth wide.” “Will I have it if I asked for it?” It is written, “He that asks

receives; he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.”

If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall have this unspeakably great blessing of being immediately saved, for, “He that believes on the Son of God has everlasting life.” “Open your mouth wide.” “But I am such a sinner.” Open your mouth, Man! The promise makes no limit as to who you are. “But I am—I am—.” There, I mind not what you are. Open your mouth, Man! Open your mouth wide! If we were to gather together in one place all the little waifs and strays of London streets, and were to say to them, “Children, we are going to give you a good dinner, and all you have to do is open your mouths,” I do not suppose one little hungry wretch would shut his mouth, or turn away muttering, “I am not fit.” Oh dear, no! You can be quite sure that they would open their mouths if all were hungry, and would need no pressing either!

And so will you, too, if the Spirit of God has made you hunger and thirst after righteousness. Open your mouth wide, believing that Jesus is the Christ! Trust your soul with Him and ask, now, for immediate pardon through His precious blood, and you will not be denied. May the Holy Spirit make you hungry and then your longing mouth shall be filled—and God shall have all the glory. May His blessing rest upon you for Christ’s sake.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 81.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—978, 986, 980.  
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ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAYER  
NO. 2380

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1894.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 19, 1888.

**“I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Psalm 81:10.**

The preceding verse bids us turn away from any strange God—“There shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god.” Idolatry is the natural sin of man. It covers a very large surface of the realm of sin and it is always cropping up in some form or other. Idolatry is not merely the bowing before graven images—the essence of it lies in putting trust in any other than the great invisible God. We can easily make to ourselves gods of our experience, of our wealth, of our talents. We can make idols of our children, of our wives, of our husbands, of our friends. We can make a god of anything by valuing it more than we do our Savior, or by trusting in it beyond our God, or by refusing to trust in Him apart from it. You can make a god of the means of Grace—when you think more of the means of Grace than of God and the Grace of the means! You can make a god of your Bible when you think that the reading of it, apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit, will be all that you require! So you see that it is very easy for man to fall into idolatry.

The cure for this evil lies in our having a living God always before us. If you forget the living God, you will make to yourself an idol god. It is a necessity of your nature that you should have a god of some sort and, to prevent your having a strange god, you must trust, cling to and love Jehovah, the one only living and true God.

The man who has Christ before him does not need a crucifix. The man who comes to God through Jesus Christ does not need the intercession of the Virgin Mary or of saints and angels. The man who has set the Lord always before him does not desire symbols of Jehovah’s Presence—in fact, he remembers the words of Moses to the children of Israel—“Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves; for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: and lest you lift up your eyes unto Heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of Heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord, your God, has divided unto all nations under the whole Heaven.”

Such a man is afraid, sometimes, if there is anything like a similitude about his prayers, lest his mind should be taken away from worshipping God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. He, therefore, generally seeks after great simplicity of worship, for an ornate ritual is a stumbling block to him, although there are some who think that it is a help to them. It only hinders him and, therefore, he rejects it. Oh, that God might always keep us clear of all idolatry by His good Spirit enabling us to worship Him in spirit and in truth! Then would these words be fulfilled in our experience—“There shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god.” He who has learned to trust the Creator will not want to trust the creature! He who has stayed himself upon the Rock of Ages will not be tempted to support himself upon the broken reed of human strength! Who will lean on a cloud when his defense may be the munitions of stupendous rocks? Who will wish to feed on the mist when he has eaten the true Bread which comes down from Heaven? God, the true God, casts out all strange gods!

In our text we have God coming very near to His people, and coming near them to encourage them to come nearer to Him. We have the Lord speaking to them, that they may speak to Him. He opens His mouth to them, that they may open their mouths to Him. The text contains one encouragement and two arguments for it—they will be our two divisions. First, God encouraging His people. And, secondly, God using two great arguments. You see, the exhortation is sandwiched in between two arguments. The first is, “I am the Lord—I am Jehovah—your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” Then comes the exhortation, “Open your mouth wide.” And that is followed by the other argument, “I will fill it.” There is a good reason, indeed, for opening the mouth wide, when God has promised to fill it!

I. To begin, then, the exhortation of the sermon will be that which we find in the text, in which we hear GOD ENCOURAGING HIS PEOPLE by saying, “Open your mouth wide.”

I suppose that the Lord means by this exhortation, first of all, to help us to get rid of the paralyzing influence of fear. A man, in the presence of one whom he dreads, cannot speak boldly. And if he has been guilty of some great crime and stands before one whom he regards as his judge, he is like the man in our Lord’s parable—“speechless.” A man on his knees, conscious of his sin, fearing the justice of God, would very naturally be unable to speak. And to encourage him, God says, “Open your mouth; be not afraid. Open your mouth wide; confess your sin; acknowledge your wanderings from your God; go into the particulars of your iniquity; ask for My mercy; plead My promises; set forth the arguments that can be drawn from the Cross of Christ. Open your mouth wide; be not afraid to speak.”

Am I addressing some child of God, or rather, one who hardly knows whether he is a child of God or not, but who wants to be one? Do you feel as if you cannot pray? God, here, encourages you to plead with Him! He says, “Open your mouth.” Your eyes are filled with tears, or perhaps you are wishing that they might be. Your heart is swelling with grief, but you cannot find expressions for your feelings. You are afraid to come before the Lord. You dare not take hold of the horns of the altar. You think that it would be presumption on your part to look to Christ and hope for mercy, so, there you lie, dumb before God! But, bending over you in infinite compassion, the Great Father says, “Open your mouth! Speak, My child! My ears are waiting to hear your cry. I am ready to grant your request. Oh, be not silent before Me! Pour out your heart like water in My Presence—turn it upside down and, to the last dregs, let all flow out before Me. Reserve nothing! Spread your case before Me, now.” I think that this exhortation means just that.

Next, “Open your mouth wide.” That is, speak freely in prayer to God, be not hampered in your pleading. I have known children of God who have felt a terrible awe in the Presence of the Lord—which is a most proper feeling up to a certain point—but they have had a fear which has brought them into bondage, and bondage is a sad evil. We need freedom and liberty of access to God when we come before the Mercy Seat. And the Lord, therefore, encourages His people to break loose from all their shackles when He says, “Open your mouth wide.” There are many prayers that it would not be right to pray in public, but they are very dear to God’s ears in private. I believe that there are prayers uttered by godly men—uneducated and illiterate Believers—that might provoke a smile from us, but they are accepted in the Beloved, and received as good, sound supplication before the Lord God of Sabaoth. “Open your mouth wide.” If you cannot pray as you would, pray as you can, but make yourself free with your heavenly Father! Be bold with your Lord! Shake off all reserve and keep back nothing from Him!

Bare your hearts before Him—you cannot conceal anything from Him—do not attempt to do so. Freely commune with the Lord as friend speaks to friend, or as a child addresses his father. You are not, now, before your judge. You are not before an enemy. You are not before one who will harshly criticize you and pull you to pieces—the Lord is all love and gentleness to those who seek His face. Then open your mouth wide! What is it that you have done? What is it that you need? What is it that your soul is craving for? What is it that drives you to despair? Open your mouth wide—let all come out—hide nothing from your God! Let your very heart come marching out at the open doors of your lips, for God is waiting to hear your petition.

The exhortation of the text means, then, shake off all fear, and, also, exercise a holy boldness of familiarity and freedom in the Presence of the Most High.

Do you not think, however, that it means something more than that? It must also mean, ask great things. “Open your mouth wide.” Now note this. The greater the thing that you ask, the more sure you are to have it! With men it is, usually, the smaller the favor you crave, the more likely you are to obtain it. But with God it is the other way—the greater the gift for which you ask, the more sure you are to have it! There is nothing greater to ask for than Christ—and you may have Christ for the asking— for God has already given Him to all who believe. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If you ask for wealth, you may not get it, for it is a small and paltry thing which the Lord may not care to give you. But if you ask for eternal life, you shall have it, for this is a great thing and God delights to give the greatest blessings to those who come to Him by Christ Jesus, so that, what might seem to hinder should now encourage! God can hear you if you cannot open your mouth, for He can hear the inward groans of your heart. But, oh, you can be sure that He will hear you if you can open your mouth wide!

Is your sin great? Use that as an argument! Say with David, “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity; for it is great.” Are you in a very sad plight? Are you spiritually bankrupt? Then plead your poverty— there is no plea like it with God! Do you feel empty? Plead your emptiness! The more urgent your necessity, the more sure will mercy be to relieve you! The greater your need, the readier is God to come to you! If, in going through the town, I see a doctor’s carriage hurrying along at a great speed, I do not think that the physician is driving to a person who has only a toothache! I should conceive that somebody, in dire extremity, had sent for him in hot haste to come and cure him, if possible, of a serious malady. And when God rides upon a cherub and flies, yes, does fly upon the wings of the wind, He is coming to relieve some great need of His people! To the man who has a great need, God says, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Ask great things! God’s people need to be taught to ask great things! That was a noble utterance of William Carey, “Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.” The less you expect from man, the better, but the more you expect from God, the more you are likely to receive. Look for great things from Him and come to Him with large requests—

*“You are coming to a King,  
Large petitions with you bring.”*

Our text must mean that, must it not— ask great things?  
I think that it also means, in the fourth place, that we are to feel in  
tense desires. “Open your mouth.” It has been noticed that whenever a  
man speaks with very great earnestness, he opens his mouth wide. We  
read in the Gospels that when our Lord went up into a mountain and,  
“was set, his disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and  
taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit,” and so on. Someone  
observed that it was quite unnecessary to say that He opened His mouth,  
for how could He preach without doing so? But another and a wiser person replied, “Oh, if you go into many a Church and Chapel, you can see  
the thing done!” When a man does not speak distinctly and clearly, he  
does not open his mouth—but when he is emphatic and earnest in his  
address, he must open his mouth wide!  
The Lord urges us to be in earnest when He says, “Open your mouth  
wide.” Cold prayers, so-called, are not real prayers—they are rather entreaties to be denied—all their force works backwards! We must pray  
with fervency, importunity, reiteration, if we would prevail with God! We must say, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.” The Lord loves that kind of pleading! There is no music in God’s ear that is more sweet from His child than a loud earnest cry! God delights to hear the knocker of prayer hammering away at the door of mercy! If you have been denied six times, go for the seventh time and knock, and knock, and knock—each time with greater vehemence—if you would be heard. “Open your mouth  
wide.”  
O dear Hearers, some of you have been seeking the Lord a little, lately,  
and you have not found Him! No, but He is not a little God, to be sought  
a little! And when your whole heart and soul go after Him. When you are  
deeply anxious and sorely exercised, and solemnly in earnest, then will  
this great God give you His great salvation! Oh, that you would open your  
mouth wide! Cry unto Him! I mean not with actual loudness of voice, but  
with the loudness of the heart’s voice which shall be heard in Heaven.  
Sometimes, when it rains very hard, and the servant does not come to  
the door very quickly, you give such a pull at the bell that it rings all over  
the house—now give such a ring as that at the gate of Heaven! A storm is  
raging and you cannot endure waiting outside in the tempest. Pull the  
bell as if you would pull Heaven, itself, down! Give a ring that seems to  
say, “I must come in! Infinite Love, I must possess You! Sovereign Mercy,  
I must receive You! I die, I perish, I am lost forever unless You come to  
me, my God.” Open your mouth wide and then He will be sure to fill it! Once more, I think that this exhortation means exercise a great expectancy. I inadvertently touched upon that point just now. The figure is, no  
doubt, taken from a bird’s nest. Have you ever seen the little birds, inside  
a nest, when they expected their mother to come and feed them? If you  
have ever peeped in and they mistook you for their mother, what did they  
look like? Why, they looked like a mass of mouth! They opened their  
mouths as wide as they could and it is really surprising how very wide a  
little bird can open its mouth! The mother is about to bring a worm, or  
some other thing for it to feed upon—the wee birdie is famishing and it  
cannot receive food any other way but by opening its mouth! And its  
hunger makes it feel as if its mouth was not half wide enough and so it  
at least makes it as wide as it can when the parent bird comes to it—the  
father or mother which has been toiling and working all day long to satisfy its needs. They do work, poor little creatures, and how fast and how  
often they fly to and fro! They seem to say to their little ones, “We will fill  
you. Open your mouths wide and we will fill you.”  
As for you, poor Souls, what a mouth you have, if you do but open it! I  
mean, what needs you have! I tell you that your needs are so great that if  
all the saints on earth, and all the angels in Heaven, were to put their  
stores together and say, “We will fill you,” they would undertake a task  
utterly beyond their power! None but God, Himself, can fill the human  
heart! Only He can truly say, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.”  
Christ will fill it, however great your sense of sin and your need of pardon. The Father will fill it, however great your grief for having left His  
house. The Holy Spirit will fill it, however long your death in sin, however  
great your alienation from God! None but the Trinity can fill the heart of man! It was one of Quarles’ quaint sayings that the heart was a triangle and the world a globe and, he says, “a globe can never fill a triangle, and none but the Trinity can fill the heart of man.” Quaint as the saying is,  
the Truth of God which it embodies is absolutely certain!  
“Open your mouth wide and I will fill it,” says God. Expect just this,  
that God will give you, in answer to prayer, all that you need—“I will fill  
it.” Somebody, misquoting this text, says, “I will fill it abundantly.” Tush!  
What do you want with your, “abundantly”? God’s Word is big enough  
without any of your adverbs! “I will fill it.” If it is filled. it is filled, and  
God will fill you full! He will give you all that you require and all that you  
can ever require between this place and the gates of Heaven! “Open you  
your mouth wide, sensible of your urgent necessity, and I,” says God,  
“will supply all your needs, according to My riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.”

Now, just two or three words, here, concerning arguments that I might  
use to induce children of God to come before His Presence asking great  
things.  
First, consider God’s greatness. You may expect great things from Him  
who made the heavens and the earth! Look up at the stars, see how the  
Lord flung them about by handfuls, and remember that all the stars that  
are visible to you are only the sweepings of stardust by the door of God’s  
great House! There is an infinite number of bright worlds which our telescopes have never seen. He who made all these things is great in power.  
Therefore, ask something great of Him when you come before Him in  
prayer. Remember, also, His goodness. God delights to give—you are not  
asking Him to do that which will vex Him. The Lord is no miser who miserably doles out His coppers under pressure. He is a God to whom it is  
as natural to give as it is for the sun to shine, or for a fountain to flow!  
Come, then, to Him with large petitions, since He is so greatly good! Remember, also, the channel by which mercies come to you. It is Christ  
Jesus your Lord. Are you coming to the Lord for pennyworths, in the  
name of Christ? Say, will you satisfy yourself by asking for pence and  
farthings through the Lord Jesus? Such a Mercy Seat as this was meant  
for something grand and glorious! Such a Sacrifice as Christ’s was provided for the greatest needs of men! Open your mouths wide when you  
mention the name of Jesus Christ! It seems a poor thing to stint yourselves in your prayers when the name you plead is—  
*“The name high over all  
In Hell, or earth, or sky!  
Angels and men before it fall—  
And devils fear and fly.”*  
Note, next, that the Holy Spirit is the Author of true prayer. He “helps  
our infirmities.” and will you stutter and stammer when the Holy Spirit  
helps you? Will you say of such a thing, “This is too great for me to ask”?  
What? When the Holy Spirit prompts you to ask, does He not know what  
is fit for you to ask? Yield yourself to His gracious impulses! Be borne  
along the stream of supplication by the Spirit’s influence and ask what  
you will! That is a pretty story that they tell of Alexander having given a  
man a present which seemed far too great. So he was afraid that it could not be his and then Alexander said, “It may be too much for you to receive, but it is not too much for me to give.” So the mercy may seem too great for you to have, but it is by no means too great for Christ to grant you! Open your mouth wide, then, while you have such a Father, Son  
and Holy Spirit to go to in prayer!  
“Open your mouth wide,” for your needs are very great. They are much  
greater than you know—do not, therefore, fall short in your petitions. I  
think that if I could have anything I asked for of any friend, I would be  
inclined to overleap my necessities a little, rather than to fall short of  
them. Certainly with God, who is not impoverished by giving, and not enriched by withholding, we may take vast liberties. “Open your mouth  
wide and I will fill it.” Ask much in prayer because your needs are so  
great.  
And then think of the needs of others. Oh, when I think of what power  
prayer has, I would encourage Brothers and Sisters to pray great prayers  
for the conversion of London, for the establishment of Christ’s Church in  
the land and for the conversion of China, Africa, India. “Open your  
mouth wide.” There was one who seemed to have great power in prayer  
and I have often read his life, but I think the prayers he used to pray  
were for a pair of horses, or for a new suit of clothes, or something of that  
sort. He always obtained what he asked, but it seems a miserable business to pray like that! It is much nobler to pray, like Carey, “India for  
Christ!” or, “Lord, save China!” Now you have asked for something great  
this time! “Open your mouth wide,” as you have such a great God to deal  
with about such great matters! You may ask for little things when you  
need them and you are encouraged to do so, but still, do not confine your  
requests to them. Come to great things and ask great mercies for others,  
if you are not under any great necessity yourself!  
Remember, once more, God’s exceedingly great and precious promises.  
How can you be praying on a right scale if you are always praying straitened in yourselves? O dear Friends, the promises of God are not narrow!  
They are “exceedingly great and precious promises.” You have never fully  
measured them! Come, then, with an open mouth, and ask great things  
of your Father who is in Heaven. Thus have I, at some length, handled  
the exhortation in the text, but I cannot do much with it—it is only the  
Holy Spirit who can effectually whisper into your ear and heart, “Open  
your mouth wide.”  
II. Now, secondly, observe GOD USING TWO GREAT ARGUMENTS  
upon which I will only speak briefly. One is put before the exhortation  
and one is put afterwards, to keep it with an attendant on either side. The first reason why you should open your mouth wide is because of  
what God has done. He says, “I am the Lord your God, which brought  
you out of the land of Egypt.” You remember where these words occur,  
do you not? They are recorded very solemnly in the 20th Chapter of Exodus, at the commencement of the Ten Commandments—“I am the Lord  
your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of  
bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.” And now the same  
solemn words come before a promise, as if God made this precept to be as solemn as His Law and confirmed the promise with all the solemnities with which He established the Covenant. “Open your mouth wide,” He  
says.  
Child of God, this text belongs peculiarly to you. “I am Jehovah, your  
God.” The Lord has an election of Grace—He has a peculiar people whom  
He has chosen unto Himself—and they shall show forth His praise. God  
is the God of His people. “I am Jehovah, your God,” He says. If He is not  
the God of others, yet He is your God. He has revealed Himself to you. He  
has chosen you and you have chosen Him, Now, can you not open your  
mouth wide to your own God, to Jehovah, the great, “I AM,” the boundless, the infinite, the almighty God—can you not speak freely to Him? And then it is added, “I am Jehovah, your God, which brought you out  
of the land of Egypt.” Now, that is the greatest thing that God could do  
for His people and, if He has done that, will He not do the lesser things?  
Oh, what a wondrous deliverance that was, when, with a high hand and  
an outstretched arm, He brought forth His people, despite all the opposition of Pharaoh! With terrible plagues He broke the power of the proud  
monarch, but as for His people, He led them forth like sheep and brought  
them out into a glorious liberty—and crushed the chivalry of Egypt at the  
Red Sea so that they could never again pursue the Israelites—nor disturb  
them in their wilderness march towards the land which God had promised them.  
Well now, the Lord has done just that same kind of thing for all His  
people! He has brought us out of our spiritual bondage! We have eaten  
the Paschal Lamb. We have sprinkled the blood. We have escaped the  
destroying angel. We are no longer under the power of sin and Satan—  
the Lord has set us free! And, as for our sins, the depths have covered  
them! There is not one of them left—they sank to the bottom like a stone.  
Glory be to God for what He has done! If this does not lead us to open  
our mouths wide in prayer, what will?  
“Ah,” sighs a poor soul, “He has never done that for me. I am still a  
bond slave.” Listen! If He has done it for others, take hope from it that  
God will hear prayer and save you, seeing that He has saved others. Did  
you ever notice, in the old slave times, in the Southern States of America,  
how, when a slave escaped, others heard that he had followed the pole  
star and so gained liberty, and they all took hope? Well now, if the Lord  
has brought some of us out of bondage, take hope, you who are still in  
chains! God can deliver you! Ask Him to do so—open your mouth wide!  
When you get home, cry to God in your chamber. Better still, here in  
your pew, breathe a prayer for salvation and liberty—and if you need a  
word of advice and counsel, come on to this lower platform and there  
shall be some friend to speak with you, and pray with you about your  
soul. Only open your mouth! Do not be ashamed! God says to you that  
He has brought His people out of Egypt and He who has done that can  
do anything! Open your mouth wide and He will fill it.  
But the second argument, with which the text closes, is concerning  
what God will do. “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” “I will fill it.”  
The story goes—I know not how true it is, but I remember reading it very well—that the Shah of Persia, a strange man, altogether, on one occasion said to a person who had pleased him very greatly, “Open your mouth.” And when he had opened his mouth, the Shah began to fill it up with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and all sorts of precious stones! I feel morally certain that the man opened his mouth wide! I do not know what your opinions may be, but I have the firm conviction that when he found that such treasure was being put into his mouth, he made it as large as it very well could be, whether it looked beautiful or not! Would not you do the same if you had such an opportunity? Suppose that your mouth was to be filled with sovereigns and you were in extreme poverty—would you not open your mouth? It would prompt a man to open his mouth wide if he heard the Shah say, “I will fill it.” Now, the Lord says to each of His own people, whom He has so highly favored, “Open your mouth wide and  
I will fill it.”  
Suppose you open your mouth wide in prayer. “I cannot,” says one.  
Well, open your mouth and God will fill it with prayer and then, when  
you have prayed the prayer that He has given you, He will fill it with answers! God gives prayer as well as the answer to prayer! Only open your  
mouth and, as it were, make a vacuum for God to fill. God loves to look  
for emptiness where He may stow away His Grace!

When you have done that, then open your mouth with praise! It is  
wonderful, when a man begins to praise God, how the praise keeps on  
coming. The praise of God is something like Mr. Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. He began to write, he says, and he does not know how he wrote so  
much, but he quaintly says, “As I pulled, it came.” And you will find it is  
so with the praise of God. Praise Him and you will praise Him. If you do  
not praise Him, you never will praise Him. If you do not begin, you will  
never keep on—but once open the sluices of gratitude and the streams  
will flow more and more copiously every hour! “Open your mouth wide  
and I will fill it.”  
So is it in comparing our testimony concerning God’s goodness. Sometimes we who are preachers have to cry, “What shall we say to the people?” I see some dear Brothers, here, who, I dare say, get as I do, into a  
very poverty-stricken state. They say, “Where shall we get the next sermon from?” Well, go in God’s name and say what He bids you, and He  
will tell you more! Open your mouth wide and He will fill it. Bear testimony to what the Lord has done for your soul, in your own small way,  
and He will be pleased to fill your mouth with His good Word, so that you  
shall abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness!  
Now, then, let us all come before God with open mouths. Whatever  
state of mind we may be in, if we cannot pray, let us come and open our  
mouth and pant, as David did when he said, “As the hart pants after the  
water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God.” So let us come before  
our God. You who feel as if you could not speak and could scarcely think,  
come with your mouth wide open and stand there before God! Or be like  
the little bird in its nest—open your mouth towards Heaven! Mark how  
the parched earth, in times of drought, cracks and opens its mouth for  
the rain. Let your parched heart begin to pray in the Presence of your God and thus ask for His Grace. May God give us mighty desires! We read of Daniel, in the margin of our Bible, instead of, “a man greatly Beloved,” “a man of desires.” He was a man of great desires! And if we are like he in this respect, we shall soon be greatly blessed, and God will be greatly glorified! May it be so, for His great name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Psalm 81**

We have here an exhortation to praise God and this is always in season. Perhaps we need more stirring up to praise than to prayer, yet it ought to be as natural for us to praise God as it is for the birds to sing. Thus the Psalm begins—

Verse 1. Sing aloud unto God our strength. Yes, the strength which the Lord gives you should be spent in praising Him. “Sing aloud.” Throw your whole soul into it. If the Lord makes you strong, then give your strength back to Him in sacred song—“Sing aloud unto God our strength.”

1. Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Other gods, such as Moloch and Ashtaroth, are worshipped with mournful cries and sorrowful lamentations. But the God of Jacob, the God that hears prayer, the God of salvation, the God of the Covenant, is to be worshipped with joy! He is the happy God and He loves happy worshippers—“Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.” You do not need to be forced to praise Him—you will do it with alacrity and delight! The very sweetness of your song will consist in the cheerfulness of it! “Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.”

2-4. Take a Psalm and bring here the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the Psaltery. Blow the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a Law of the God of Jacob. It is “a statute” that we should praise God. It is “a Law” that we should make a joyful noise before Him. Happy Law and happy men who are under such a Law! Let us be quick to obey it and let not the King’s statute be disregarded by any one of us.

5. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when He went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. God understands His people’s language and, in very truth, He understands everything. But here He uses a Hebraism to show that He did not care for the speech of the Egyptians—“I heard a language that I understood not.” This sentence is like that other expression, “I never knew you.” Of course the Lord knows everyone as a matter of acquaintance, but not as a matter of affection. He cared not for the Egyptians—they were aliens to Him. He went out against the land of Egypt. It was for Joseph and for His own people who were under the leadership of Joseph in that heathen land, that He ordained this statute that they should praise the name of Jehovah.

6. I removed his shoulder from the burden. Is not that true of many of you in a spiritual sense? Oh, what a burden of sin we used to carry! How have we got rid of it? Does not the Lord, here, remind us of how we lost that grievous load? “I removed his shoulder from the burden.”

6. His hands were delivered from the pots. We used to be busy enough with the slave’s occupation of making bricks without straw. Hard was the task when we were under legal bondage—harder, still, the toil, when under the bondage of our own sin, slaves of ourselves! Who could ever have a more tyrant master than himself? But that is all over, now, and the Lord can say, “I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.”

7. You called in trouble and I delivered you. What a gracious Word is this! How it reminds us, in the most loving tones, of our obligations to the Lord! “You called in trouble and I delivered you.”

7. I answered you in the secret place of thunder: I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. A very humbling sentence this! God has often proved us and He has often disproved us. When He has tried us, we have not endured the test as we ought to have done. We have murmured and complained and the waters which ought to have been waters of joy and of happy patience, have been waters of strife. “Selah.” That is, “Pause.” Tighten the harp strings, lift up the heart! Such a Psalm as this is to be read by installments, with little halts on the road for us to meditate and think upon the Truth of God brought before us. We may well pause, here, when we hear the Lord reminding us of our faults and of His great mercy to us—“I delivered you; I answered you; I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah.”

8. Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto you: O Israel, if you will hearken unto Me. What? Is there any question as to whether God’s people will listen to Him or not? Alas, sometimes our ears grow very heavy—we are so occupied with the cares of the world, so sleepy while passing over the Enchanted Ground that we do not hear that dear voice to which we ought to give heed whenever it speaks—“Hear, O My people, O Israel, if you will hearken unto Me.”

9. There shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god. It is strange that we should ever wish to do so. Oh, that we might be wholly delivered from everything that looks like idolatry and be enabled to cleave to the worship of the one living and true God with the serenity and certainty of faith!

10, 11. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide and I will fill it. But My people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would none of Me. Oh, how plaintive is this lament! Is it not full of sorrow? “Israel would none of Me.” Her own God, her own Friend, her own Benefactor, her own Husband has to cry, “Israel would none of Me—would not have My Law, My promise, My guidance, Myself—Israel would none of Me.”

12. So I gave them up—Dreadful word! If God gives us up, even for a moment, there is no telling into what sin we may plunge! And if He were to give us up altogether—ah, me, this is the most direful of sentences— “So I gave them up”—

12. Unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels. O God, save us from this awful state! This, indeed, is Hell—to be given up of God! Pray, dear Brothers and Sisters, that such a terrible curse may never come upon you! Yet it is a most righteous punishment if a man will not have God—and will give God up—what can be a more righteous retribution than that God should give him up? He does so, at last, with ungodly men, yet He does it very reluctantly, and He says, “How shall I give you up?” May He never give up one of you!

13. Oh that My people had listened to Me, and Israel had walked in My ways. And can we not echo that lament and say, “Oh, that we had listened to God, and that we had walked in His ways”? What a happy life would the Believer enjoy if he always had an ear for God’s Commandments and a foot for His ways! “Oh that My people had listened to Me, and Israel had walked in My ways!”

14, 15. I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him; and their time should have endured forever. “Their time”—the time of His own people—“should have endured forever.” They might have been always conquerors, always kings, always favored of God, always walking in the light, as God is in the light. So might it be with us if we would first, listen to God, and next, walk in His ways. The mark on the ear and the mark on the foot are two of the tokens of Christ’s sheep—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” May we all have both the ear-mark and the foot-mark!

16. He would have fed them, also, with the finest of the wheat. How sweet would Gospel doctrine be if Gospel precepts were observed! When you do not enjoy the preaching of the Word, is it not because you are out of health and your spiritual appetite is impaired? “He would have fed them, also, with the finest of the wheat.” When the soul lives near to God, then the Word of the Lord is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

16. And with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied you. You know what this “honey out of the rock” is. You have tasted it and in days gone by you have feasted on it! Perhaps you have not had much of it of late. If so, remember why this is. God will give His children bread, but He will not give them honey unless they live very near to Him—you shall have the necessaries of life, but not luxuries. The high and heavenly joys of the Divine Life shall be denied you if you work at a distance from your God. But if you stay close to Him, you shall have the finest of the wheat, and you shall be satisfied with honey out of the rock.

May the Lord bless the reading of His Word to us, and may He draw us nearer to Himself! Amen.  
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THE WIDE-OPEN MOUTH FILLED  
NO. 2879

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE PASTOR’S COLLEGE CONFERENCE,** ON FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1876.

**“I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Psalm 81:10.**

You have, no doubt, met with various interpretations of this metaphor—“Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” You will find that several expositors say that there is an allusion, here, to a custom which is said to have been observed by the late Shah of Persia, who, being greatly pleased with one of his courtiers, made him open his mouth and then began to fill it with diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds. I shall expect that, under such circumstances, the courtier would open his mouth very wide indeed!

Well, you may use that incident as an illustration, if you like and, certainly, the spiritual blessings which God gives to His children are far more precious than pearls, diamonds and rubies—and there is every inducement for you to open your mouth to receive such treasure as He is waiting and willing to give you! But I do not feel sure that the Holy Spirit intended the Psalmist to allude to any such custom as this. It is too expensive an operation to be very frequently performed and it strikes me that even such semi-maniacs as Shahs and Sultans usually are, would not be likely to often attempt such a feat as that. In default of a more suitable illustration, it might be used, but it does not appear to me to be in accordance with the chaste and natural tone of the Word of God.

Another illustration of the text may be found in a custom which is much more common in the East. At Oriental feasts, when the head of the household wishes to select the best part of the meat for an honored guest, he usually chooses the fattest portion he can find, as the Oriental mind conceives just what we would not conceive, namely, that a mass of fat, all dripping with grease, is the most delicious morsel that can possibly be given to a guest. So the host searches for the fattest piece of meat in the dish, takes it in his hand and puts it deliberately into the mouth of the principal guest, bidding him open his mouth wide that he may receive it. This seems a revolting practice to us, but it was evidently the custom then, as it still is in the East. Thus we have David saying, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips”—as if the lips sucked it with delight even while the fat was still upon them.

But I am inclined to look for quite another explanation of the text, though admitting that the second one is probably that upon which the Psalmist was thinking when he wrote these words. One springtime I discovered a bird’s nest, in which there were a number of little birds. They were not fledged enough to fly and their judgments were not well developed and, therefore, they mistook me for their mother or father. I would not touch them, but I held my fingers over them and they opened their mouths wide—no, the little creatures seemed to me as if they were all mouth! I could not see any other part of their bodies—all seemed lost in one great vacuum. If you have ever seen the mother bird come to the nest with a worm in its mouth, you have noticed that, in an instant, all her little ones are up and eager to swallow that worm. She can only fill the mouth of one and she can scarcely do that, for, no sooner has it swallowed what she gives it than it begins to gape again!

So the parent birds have to keep flying very fast, all day long, collecting food for their family but, however many times they come, they never have to use the exhortation of our text! The little birds in their nests are far more sensible than we are. When God hovers over us with His widespread wings and covers us with His warm feathers, He has need to say to each one of us, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” But the little birds take good care, without any teaching, to open their mouths wide that their mothers may fill them. This illustration may occur again during the sermon, for, whether it is the one to which the Psalmist alludes, or not, it is a very useful one and is full of instruction. It also has the further advantage that it does not appertain to either the East or the West and, as this blessed Book is neither for East nor West, alone, but for both, I like to find an illustration which, in all times and in every clime, may open up the meaning of the Word. “Open your mouth,” then, as a bird opens its mouth when the mother bird returns with its food, and He who, in the infinitude of His condescension, likens Himself to birds, says, “I will fill it.”

Let us imitate the Inspired teachers in using things in Nature to illustrate the meaning of the messages they have to deliver. Look from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Preachers, through the long line of Prophets, to Evangelists and Apostles, and you will see that they did not utter the Truth of God with their eyes closed, but, with large sympathy, they looked abroad upon the whole range of creation, both animate and inanimate, and yoked every creature to the chariot of Truth, if, by any means, through the use of simile, metaphor and illustration, they might enable the Divine message to ride triumphantly into the hearts of the people!

If any of us are to succeed in teaching either few or many, we must imitate these masters of the art. God has given the preacher eyes as well as a tongue—yes, two eyes to one tongue—and he must take care to observe all that can be seen and to make abundant use of his observation. Otherwise he will find his speech prove to be, as Shakespeare says, “stale, flat, and unprofitable.” The true teacher should not seek to soar on the gaudy wings of brilliant oratory, pouring forth sonorous polished sentences in rhythmic harmony, but should endeavor to speak pointed Truths of God—things that will strike and stick—thoughts that will be remembered and recalled, again and again, when the hearer is far away from the place of worship where he listened to the preacher’s words.

The text naturally divides itself into three parts. First, there is the exhortation—“Open your mouth wide.” Secondly, there is the promise—“I will fill it.” And thirdly, there is the encouragement contained in the name by which God speaks of Himself—“I am Jehovah your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

I. First, then, Brothers, here is THE EXHORTATION—“Open your mouth wide.”  
What does that expression mean? Well, I should have to open my mouth very wide, indeed, if I were to explain all it means. You probably will know, by putting it in practice, better than by any explanation that I can give you, but, certainly, first of all, I should say that it means that there should be a greater sense of your need. The wide-open mouth means that you hunger. The little birds need no instruction in opening their mouths except the inward monitor. They feel a lack of food—they are growing, and growing fast, and feathers have to be made—and they need much food and those strong needs of theirs make them open their mouths by instinct, as we say. Brothers, if we had more sense of our need, prayer would be more of an instinct with us—we would pray because we could not help praying! We would pray, perhaps, less methodically, but we would pray, probably more truly, if we prayed because there were groans within us caused by intense pain and moaning that came out of inward agony and longings that came out of the consciousness of our dire necessities. Surely, this kind of opening of the mouth, by the sense of our need, ought to be easy to us, for our needs are very great. I must not say that they are infinite, for we are only finite beings, but they are so vast that only Infinity can ever supply them! What is there that you do not need, my Brother? Someone said in prayer, the other day, that we were “a bag of needs.” That was a very accurate description. Are we all conscious of our many needs?  
Dear Brother, are you growing conscious of your own power? If so, pray against it with all your might! A much better thing is to become conscious of your own weakness. You will not open your mouth wide if you do not realize how weak you are. If you feel that you are strong, you will cease to cry to God for strength. Are you getting proud of your experience of Divine things? Strive to hurl that pride down, for you will be no wiser than a wild ass’s colt if you rely on your own experience. Do you feel that you have now attained to a very high degree of Grace? You have certainly not attained it if you think you have! If you are still conscious of your own shortcomings, you are probably far ahead of your own belief— but if you are conscious of your attainments, you are far behind those attainments, rest assured of that.  
I do solemnly believe, Brothers, that it is as good a test of a man’s spiritual riches as can be found, namely, his own sense of his spiritual poverty. Oh, get less and less in your own esteem! Grow poorer and poorer, weaker and yet weaker—become, in yourselves, nothing and less than nothing! This is a grand way of opening the mouth because our needs, when they are truly felt, are really prayers, for prayers are merely the expression of the needs of our heart. And if, to the consciousness of our need, there is added the knowledge that God can supply that need, we have, at any rate, the basis of all true prayer. Oh, for a great sense of our spiritual poverty! Oh, for an awful vacuum within the soul, a consciousness most truly felt that there is room for God! Oh, for a deep chasm to yawn within one’s nature, which only Christ, Himself, can fill!

The next way of opening the mouth will be to increase the vehemence of desire. How did the Psalmist do this? He said, “I opened my mouth and panted.” This is what we need to do, to get such vehement desires after good things that we cannot take a negative answer to our petitions. We know that what we ask is for God’s Glory and our own good and, therefore, we are not going to ask as men who may be put off, but our resolve is like that of Jacob at Jabbok—  
*“With You all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.”*  
We cry, with good John Newton—  
*“No—I must maintain my hold,  
‘Tis Your goodness makes me bold.  
I can no denial take,  
When I plead for Jesus’ sake.”*  
Those prayers speed best that are most full of holy vehemence. There is an evil kind of vehemence which we must get rid of. I am not sure that all the expressions we sometimes hear in prayer are right—there is no need for us to seem to fight with God at the Mercy Seat. I feel, sometimes, a sort of shivering when I hear Brothers make a great noise in prayer without any evidence of corresponding earnestness deep down in their soul. Yet I know that our Lord Jesus said, “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” If you want to have great things of God, you must want them terribly! You must get to want them more and more. Your sense of want must keep on growing. You know also that our Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst”— hunger is bad enough and thirst is awful, but hunger and thirst combined bring a man to the verge of death—yet Jesus says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for”—Christ’s promise is parallel to the text before us—“they shall be filled.” Get that blessed hunger and thirst, Brothers! When you cannot live without conversions, you shall have conversions! When you must have them, you shall have them! May the Lord drive that “must” into us all! May He urge us on with a passionate desire to resolve that we will know the reason why if souls are not converted to God!  
Another way of opening the mouth is to ask for greater capacity. If you have ever fed a lot of little birds—no doubt my friend, Archibald Brown, has often done it—with pieces of egg. If you have some very small pieces, you drop them into the smaller mouths, but if you have a large piece of egg, where does it go? Into the biggest mouth you can find! You seem to feel, “That little bird cannot have a large piece because he has only a tiny mouth. But here is one whose mouth yawns like the crater of a small volcano!” So you drop into his mouth a larger piece and I have no doubt the mother birds exercise a good deal of discretion in feeding their young. They do not give the large worms to the little birds, but they drop the large ones into the large mouths and, in like manner, if we get large capacities, we shall receive large blessings.  
What a wonderful difference there is in the capacity of different individuals! I have heard it said that a sinner sucks in happiness, such as it is, with the mouth of an insect, but that a Believer drinks in bliss with the mouth of an angel—and it is so. The stream of mercy seems to run right over some men because there is no place for it to run in. It runs into others in driblets because there is only a little hole into which it can drip. But when the mouth is opened wide to receive the blessing of the Lord, how capacious it is! I should like, spiritually, to have my mouth like that of Behemoth, of which the Lord said to Job, “he trusts that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.” Oh, for a mouth of such mighty capacity as to be capable of receiving a far greater blessing than we have ever yet received!  
Dear Brothers, we are not straitened in God. If we are straitened at all, it is in ourselves. No wise man will try to put a gallon of any liquid into a quart pot. You cannot expect to put a bushel of anything into a peck measure. “Be you therefore enlarged,” is still the message we need to hear—and one part of that enlargement must consist in the enlargement of the mouth in prayer and in holy vehemence! God grant to all of us far greater capacity! What little men we all are! We sometimes call one another great and perhaps fancy that we are. I wonder what our Heavenly Father thinks of us? We see our little children, one of them three years old and another only two, and another only a month or two—they think the baby is a very little thing and that they themselves are ever so big— and they talk of their big brother who is only four or five years old! It is very much like that with us! There is not much more difference between the greatest and the least of us than between those children. So, if we can, we must grow—grow at the mouth and grow all over. We need to have greater Grace given to us, but the Lord will not give us great blessings until we are able to bear them. You remember how He said to His disciples, “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now”? And He might say to us, “I have yet many things to give to you, but you cannot bear them at present.” If God were now to give to any man all the blessings that He means to bestow upon him in a few years’ time, it would ruin him! When God has given us any success, it is a great addition to the mercy if He has first fitted us to bear it. Some of us can recollect Brothers taken almost straight from the miners’ pit and elevated suddenly into a position of great popularity with no training for the ministry—no persecution, no criticism from the public press and no unkind remarks from Christian men—and we remember with sorrow how they failed. So, if you, while you are young men, have to run the gauntlet of a good deal of trial, difficulty, opposition and failures, you ought to thank God for it! You are now being made ready to receive the blessing for which you were not fit before. The Lord is increasing your capacity and when the capacity is sufficient, He will fill it.  
Next, dear Brothers, I feel that the text must mean seek for greater blessings than any that you have yet received. You have opened your mouth and you have received something. Possibly you think that you have received a great deal. But the Lord “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” I have heard people say in prayer, “You are able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.” Well, I suppose that is true, but that is not what Paul was Inspired to write. We can ask and can think a great deal, but Paul says that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we actually do ask or think! Well, then, as this is the case, will we not ask for greater things than we have ever asked for before? It is a singular fact that the certainty of obtaining is in proportion to the largeness of what you ask. Some men go to God and ask only for temporal favors and, possibly, they do not obtain them. He who would be content with this world will probably never get it—but he who craves spiritual good may ask with the absolute certainty of receiving it! Christ’s promise is, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” If you ask only for temporal mercies and can be satisfied with them, you may get what you ask. There are gushing springs from which you might drink if you would, but the muddy waters of Sihor are evidently good enough for you.  
But if you ask the Lord for spiritual blessings, He is sure to give them to you. It is more natural for God to give great things than little things— they are more in His line—more in His way. You know that certain men have certain ways. There are men whom you can get to do anything if it is in their way, but they will not act in another way. Well, now, the Lord’s ways are as high above our ways as the heavens are above the earth! Yet David knew what God’s ways were, for he said, “Then will I teach transgressors Your ways.” One of the ways of God is to do great things for His people. Some of them sang, “The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad.” So you are more sure of getting blessings from God if you ask Him for great things—therefore be sure to ask for very great things! When you do get to the Mercy Seat, do not begin asking for littles and go home with trifles, but ask for as big things as ever your soul can desire and as big things as the promises of God cover! There you have a task before you that will tax your greatest powers, but give your heart and soul to it and you will find it to be a very pleasant and profitable one!  
Ask great things for yourselves, Brothers. Ask to know all the Truth of God. Ask to know the fullness of God. Ask to know the riches of His Grace. Ask to know “the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.” And when you have asked for all that, ask for holiness—and do not ask for anything less than perfect holiness. Continue to open your mouth wide that every Grace may be given to you, adding “to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love.” And do not rest satisfied until you have all these Christian virtues! You may also ask for joy and oh, what an ocean of bliss is before you in the joy of the Lord! In “the peace of God, which passes all understanding,” what a wondrous depth of joy there is laid up in store for you! Our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” It may be the same with you—therefore ask for great things! Do not be satisfied with being little Christians—seek to come to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus! I will be thankful to get just inside the gate of Heaven, but if I can sing more sweetly and if I can have more fellowship with Christ nearer His Throne, why should I not get there? God grant that we may all have that high privilege!

Once more, I think that this exhortation, “Open your mouth wide,” means attempt great things for God as well as ask great things from God. Brothers, go in for something great! Go in for saving one soul—that is something great. Go in for preaching the whole Truth of God—that is something great. Go in to be faithful to the teaching of the whole Word of God—that is something great. It is not sufficient if you have filled your own place—a good many of you have not done that yet—go in to preach the Gospel somewhere else as well. Open some other building for worship! Penetrate into some region where the Gospel is not yet known. I wish that our College would open its mouth so wide as to include the whole world in the sphere of its operations. Brother Wigstone tells us that if we open our mouth wide, we shall swallow up the whole of Spain and Portugal. Other Brothers want us to open our mouth wide enough to absorb France, Germany, Russia and all Europe! Some of our Brethren have gone to India—there is a mouthful for us! If we open our mouth wide, India may be evangelized—and China—and the new world of America and the far-distant world of Australia will feel the power of the Gospel that we take there in the name of the Lord! Let us pray, as David did long ago, that the whole earth may be filled with God’s Glory! What is the whole earth, after all, compared with the greatness of God, and with the Infinite Sacrifice that Christ has offered? Well may the Lord say to each one of us, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”  
I like big prayers, Brothers. I have some regard for the memory of William Huntington, though I would be sorry to endorse all that he said and did. He was a man whose prayers God heard and answered, but what often were his prayers? I smile, sometimes, as I think of what he asked of God—“Lord, give me a new pair of leather breeches,” or, “Give me a horse and carriage”—and he got them. William Carey cried, “India for Christ,” and his prayer has kept on ringing right down the ages! And the Church of God is still praying, “India for Christ,” and that prayer will be heard and answered in God’s good time. Little boats that carry small cargoes come quickly home, but the big ships that do business in great waters are much longer in reaching the home port. But they bring back much more precious loads! Huntington’s prayer was the little boat that proved God’s faithfulness, but Carey’s prayer was the big ship which will come home as surely as the other one did!  
So, “open your mouth wide,” Brothers, and ask something that will be honoring to God to give. Did you ever think, dear Friends, how wonderful is the condescension of God in listening to the voice of a man? That He should hear our prayers at all shows that in His condescension He is as Infinite as He is in His Glory. Do you know, in your own soul, that God has ever heard your prayers? Then bless Him and love Him all your days. You know how the writer of the 116th Psalm put the matter—“I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.” It is truly marvelous that though our prayer is so full of faults and has to do with such insignificant worms as we are, yet that the Lord hears us and grants our requests.  
There are some who talk as if prayer was a meaningless form to us. “It is a beneficial thing, no doubt, for you to pray,” they say. Surely, Sirs, you must be measuring our corn with your bushel if you imagine that we could do such an idiotic thing as pray to a god who cannot hear us! That is an employment only fit for imbeciles and if you tell us that no doubt it is a good thing for us to do, we reply that it would probably be a good thing for you to do it, for it could only be suitable to the imbecility which originated the charge brought against us! We assert and rejoice to assert that without working miracles, God still accomplishes His eternal purposes in answer to the supplications of His people. In earlier days He worked miracles for the deliverance of His servants. But today He does the same thing without the miraculous process and as manifestly grants the requests of His suppliants as if miracles were as plentiful as the leaves upon the trees in summer.  
II. Now, secondly, we turn to THE PROMISE—“I will fill it.”  
Great asking seems to me to be on a scale proportionate to the great things that are according to the very Nature of God. I have never been able to believe in a little Hell because I cannot find, in the Bible, any trace of a little Heaven, or of a little Savior, or of a little sin, or of a little God. I believe in a theology that is drawn to scale. If it is on the scale of an inch all round, I can receive it, but if it is on the scale of a foot in one place, I think it should be on the same scale throughout. Look, Brothers, at the brightness of the Shekinah Glory shining above the Mercy Seat— and that Mercy Seat red with such blood as was never spilt but once! And the Eternal Spirit leading us up to that Mercy Seat—can we go there to ask for a mere trifle? That does not seem to me to be at all congruous. Far more congruous does it seem that before the great God, with the great Mediator and the great Spirit helping our infirmities, we should open our mouth wide and expect God to fill it! O Brethren, we may be quite sure that in dealing with the Infinite Jehovah, if we can rise to His scale of things, He will fill our mouths when we open them!  
It is hard work to fill a hungry mouth, for the food disappears down the throat in a moment. When once fed, it opens again and is as empty as it was before. But God has the way of filling mouths that makes them stay full. He gives us water to drink of so wondrous a kind that we do not thirst again! Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And God says to each child of His, “‘Open your mouth wide,’ and though it seems to be like a horse-leech crying, ‘Give, give,’ ‘I will fill it.’ Though it seems as insatiable as the grave, ‘I will fill it.’” The great God Himself says it and, therefore, it must be true. If He had not said it, I would not have believed it, but having said it, He can do what seems impossible to us—He can satisfy our most insatiable cravings and longings—and He bids us keep on longing and craving that He may keep on satisfying us again and again!  
This promise is given by One who knows what we are going to ask. The Lord says, “Open your mouth wide,” and He knows what we desire to receive from Him—and He has it all ready to give to us. Did you ever bring home a present for your children and ask them to wish for something, although they did not know that, all the while, it was in your pocket? You have brought them up to the point of asking for something that they need—then they go to bed and when they wake in the morning, they are surprised to see the very thing they longed for lying on their pillow! In a similar manner, our Heavenly Father gives additional sweetness to His mercies by tempting us to long for various things that He has all ready to give to us. He may well say, “Open your mouth wide,” when He has so many good things ready to fill it!  
What will He fill our mouths with? Sometimes He will fill them with prayer. Do you not find, at times, that you cannot pray? Never mind, Brother, if it is so with you—open your mouth wide, for He will fill it. He will fill your mouth with arguments. Kneel down and groan because you cannot pray, agonize because you cannot pray and the next day you will say, “I wish I felt as I did yesterday, for I never prayed with greater power than when I thought I was not praying at all.” Open your mouth with a sense of need, a sense of desire. Open your mouth with the sensibility of insensibility. You can comprehend, by experience, the paradox that I cannot explain. God knows how to fill your mouth with prayer when you go to your pulpit. Perhaps before the time for the service came, you thought you could not pray or preach at all. You remember how the Lord said to Ezekiel, “Eat this roll and go speak unto the house of Israel,” and the Prophet said, “So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that roll.” You also may be able to do the same thing. Sitting in your study, you may be anxious because you cannot get a subject to really lay hold of you. At any rate, Brother, open your mouth with desire, eagerness and longing as you sit there—and if the Lord sends a roll to you, and shows you how to eat it—when you go to talk to your people, you shall get that promise to Ezekiel fulfilled in your own experience, “I will open your mouth, and you shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord God.” When you open your mouth in private and eat the roll that the Lord gives you, He will open your mouth in public and you shall tell the people the Truth of God upon which you have privately feasted.  
Next, the lord will fill our mouth with all manner of spiritual blessings. David says that the Lord “satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Time fails me to attempt any list of proof texts upon this point. I can only say that when the Lord opens your mouth, you may be quite certain that anything He puts into it is wholesome and good even though, sometimes, it is not according to your own taste—though it will be if your spiritual palate is in a healthy condition. If your taste is out of order, even sweet things will seem bitter to you. If your heart is not right with God, you will ask for that which would injure you if He granted your request. When the Israelites craved for flesh in the wilderness, they made a terrible mistake. It will be far wiser for you, when you open your mouth in prayer, not so much to go into details as to say, “Lord, I am a mass of needs. I hardly know what they really are and what I think I need may be a mistake, but my mouth is open to receive whatever You see to be best for me.” Then you may expect that He will fill it with all sorts of good things.

Further, the Lord will fill your mouth with sacred joy. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, His people said, “Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.” It is a blessed mouthful when you get such an amazing mercy that you cannot understand it! Have you not, sometimes, received a mercy that has been like Isaac, the child of laughter? It has come to us as Isaac came to Abraham and we have heard the sound of the mercy and have laughed for very joy! God will also fill your mouth with His praise. That was a wise prayer of the Psalmist, “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all the day.” What a blessed mouthful it would be to have your mouth so full of the praise of God that you could not help letting it run out!  
III. Now I must close by noticing THE ENCOURAGEMENT. “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Why? “Because I am Jehovah, your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.”  
Brother, it is Jehovah who says to you, “Open your mouth wide.” It does not always do to open your mouth wide to man, but the Lord says to you, “I am Jehovah, your God; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” When you stand before men, ask little and expect less. But when you stand before God, ask much and expect more—and believe that He is able to do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think! “I am Jehovah.” That is a boundless name! We know that our asking can never exceed His benevolence or His might. We are asking of a King, yes, of Him who is King of kings, so let us open our mouths wide as we approach Him. His very name prompts us to do so. Then He adds, “I am Jehovah, your God.” So, will you not ask great things of the One who has given Himself to you? Is God, Himself, yours? Then, what is there that you may not ask of Him?  
There is great force in Paul’s argument, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” There is equal force in this other argument—As He spared not His own Deity, but freely gave Himself up to be the God of His chosen ones, saying, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people,” then He will not deny them anything that they ask of Him if it is really for their good. Indeed, all things are yours already! Since He is your God, you have only to ask Him to give you that which is your own by His own gracious Covenant. I should not feel afraid or ashamed to ask anyone to give me what really belonged to me, however big it was. And, in prayer, you have to ask from God what He has already given you in Christ Jesus, for “all things are yours,” because “you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”  
Then He adds, “which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” Notice this argument, Brothers. Our own experience of deliverance from sin is a wonderful reason for asking great things of God. I speak with the utmost reverence, but it seems to me that God Himself cannot give me anything more than He has already given me in the unspeakable gift of His onlybegotten and well-beloved Son. His blessed Spirit has given unto us eternal life! All the embellishments and enrichments and sustenance of that life are not equal to the life itself. The life of God in the soul is the chief blessing—and that we have already received. Well, then, as God has given us life, surely He will give us all other great blessings that we need and will deny us nothing that is for His own Glory and our present and future good. Paul often uses this kind of argument. For instance, “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” The greater mercy having come, the lesser one will also surely come! So, ask God for large things, for you have already received larger things than you are ever likely to ask for! And so you may rest assured that you will receive, in the future, whatever God sees that you really need.  
God said to His ancient people, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” Might they not well ask large things of that God who smote Pharaoh with all those terrible plagues? Might they not well ask great things of Him who darkened the sun at midday, who brought up the locusts till they covered the land, who made the very dust of Egypt to crawl with noxious life and who sent terrific hailstorms, with fire mingled with the hail? Who would not ask great things of such a great God as that? Then think of His slaying the firstborn of Egypt and dividing the sea, even the Red Sea, and leading all the hosts of Israel through the deep and through the wilderness. He that could do all that, could, in His Infinite might, do all else that His people needed—so they might well ask great things at His hands!  
Moses sang, on the borders of the Red Sea, “He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” The Israelites might well ask great things of Him who had overthrown all their adversaries! And you who have experienced such a marvelous deliverance by the blood of Jesus Christ, ought surely to be bold when you go to the Mercy Seat! The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was by blood. The paschal lamb was slain and its blood was sprinkled upon the houses of the Israelites. But you have not been redeemed with the blood of earthly lambs, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Can it be possible, after such a redemption, that anything that is needed to bring you into the promised land and to enrich you with all temporal and spiritual blessings should ever be withheld from you?  
Let us, each one, go to the Mercy Seat with our mouths wide open and then let us go to our pulpits and preach with our mouths wide open, even as Paul wrote, “O you Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.” Your mouths may well be open to your hearers because they have first been opened unto God!  
I am thankful that throughout this Conference, I have seen no traces of doubt and no signs of despondency. Every Brother has seemed to have confidence in God and to have hope, like a bright light, guiding him on his way. I have no doubt that some of you will see “greater things than these” even here on earth, while others will see them from the heights of Heaven. As surely as we have the Gospel with us and the Holy Spirit with us—as surely as God has led us thus far through the wilderness, as surely as He keeps us knit together in love and unity—so surely will He lead us from strength to strength—and the Lord will be magnified in our mortal bodies whether by life or by death! And we shall, by His Grace, all appear before Him in Zion. God bless you, Brothers! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2491 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SHAME LEADING TO SALVATION  
NO. 2491

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1896.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31, 1886.

**“Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Your name, O LORD!” Psalm 83:16.**

THIS is a very terrible Psalm. It contains some prayers against the enemies of God and of His people that crash with the thunder of indignation. You know that we are bid to love our enemies, but we are never commanded to love God’s enemies. We may not hate any men as men, but as they are opposed to God, to truth, to righteousness, to purity, we may and we must, if we are, ourselves, right-minded, feel a burning indignation against them! Did you ever read the story of “the middle passage” in the days of the African slave trade, when the Negroes died by hundreds, or were flung into the sea to lighten the ship? Did you ever read of those horrors without praying, “O God, let the thunderbolts of Your wrath fall on the men who can perpetrate such enormities”? When you heard the story of the Bulgarian atrocities, did you not feel that you must, as it were, pluck God’s sleeve and say to Him, “Why does Your justice linger? Let the monsters of iniquity be dealt with by You, O Lord, as they deserve to be”?

Such is the spirit of this Psalm. But I like best this particular verse in it because while it breathes righteous indignation against the wicked, it has mixed with it the tender spirit of love. “Fill their faces with shame,” prays the Psalmist, “but overrule Your severity for their everlasting good, ‘that they may seek Your name, O Lord.’” The worst fate that I wish to any Hearer of mine who is without God and without hope in the world, is that this prayer may be prayed by honest and loving hearts for him and for others like he—“Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Your name, O Lord.”

I. To begin with, let me remind you that UNGODLY MEN HAVE GOOD CAUSE TO BE ASHAMED.  
Let us talk a little, first, of their wrong to their Maker. If I might take each one of you by the hand, I should say to you, “Friend, you believe in the existence of God, your Maker, do you not? Well, then, have you treated Him rightly? If you have lived in the world 20 years, or perhaps even 40 or 50 years, and yet you have never served Him, do you think that is quite just to Him? If He made you and has fed you and kept you in being all these years, has He not a right to expect some service from you? I might go further and ask, has He not a right to expect your love? Does He ask more than He should ask when He says, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’? Yet you have lived these many years and scarcely thought of Him! Certainly you have not spoken to Him, you have never confessed your faults to Him, or sought His forgiveness. To all intents and purposes, you have lived as if there were no God at all! Yet, in your earthly affairs you are a very honest man, and you pay everybody else his due— why do you, then, rob your God of what is justly His? There is not a man in the world who could say truly of you that you had dealt dishonorably with him. You pride yourself upon your uprightness and integrity! But must God, alone, then, be made to suffer through your injustice? Out of all beings, must He, alone, who made all other beings, be the only one to be neglected? He is first of all—do you put Him last? He is best of all—do you treat Him worst? If so, I think that such conduct as this is a thing to be ashamed of and I pray that you may be heartily ashamed of it.”

Let me quit that line of thought and remind you, next, that there are many ungodly men, and I suppose some here present, who ought to be ashamed because they are acting in opposition to light and knowledge, contrary to their conscience and against their better judgments. There are many unconverted men who can never look back upon any day of their lives without having to accuse themselves of wrong. And although they are not Christians, they would scarcely attempt to justify their position. When they act wrongly, there is a voice within them which tells them that they are doing wrong. They are not blind—they could see if they chose to see. They are not deaf, except that there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. It is a horrible thing for a man to be always holding down his conscience, like a policeman holding down a mad dog. It is a terrible thing for a man to have to be at war with himself in order to destroy himself—his better self resisting and struggling, as it were, after salvation—but his worse self thrusting back the higher part of his being, sliding his conscience and drowning the cries of any approach to bitterness that may be within him. God forbid that men should act thus and sin against light and knowledge! I venture very quietly, but very solemnly, to tell any who are doing so that they ought to be ashamed of such conduct. They ought to blush at the very thought of acting thus against such light as they have and against the convictions of their own conscience.  
There are also some of my Hearers—I speak very positively upon this point—who ought to be ashamed because of their postponements of what they know to be right. They have, again and again, put off the observance of duties which they know and admit to be incumbent upon them. “I ought to repent of sin,” says one. And then he adds, “and I will, one of these days.” “I ought to be a believer in Christ”—he admits that—“and I shall be, I hope, before I die.” Oh, how fairly you talk, Mr. Procrastinator! You know what ought to be done at once, but you leave it all for the future. Do you not know that every time a man neglects a duty, he commits a sin? That which you admit is your duty, causes you, every moment it is delayed, to commit sin by the delay! And by delay, obedience becomes more difficult and you, yourself, become continually more likely to commit yet greater sin! I think that a man who says, “I ought to believe in Christ, I ought to repent of sin, I ought to love God,” and yet says, “Well, I will do so at a more convenient season,” ought to be ashamed of himself for talking and acting in such a wicked fashion! I pray God that he may be.  
I shall come more pointedly home to some when I say that they ought to be ashamed because of their violation of vows which they have made. You were very ill, a little while ago, and you said, “O God, if You will but spare my life, and restore me to health and strength, I will rise from this bed to be a better man!” God did raise you up, but you are not a better man. You were seriously injured in an accident and likely to die—and in your distress you prayed, “O God, if You will prolong my unworthy life, I will turn over a new leaf. I will be a very different man in the future!” Well, you are a different man, for you are worse than you used to be before the accident! That is all the change that has been worked in you. God keeps a register of the vows that are so lightly broken here below, but so well remembered up in Heaven, and the day will come when they shall be brought out to the condemnation of those who made them and then failed to keep them! If you are determined to be a liar, lie not to God! If you are resolved to make promises, only to break them, at least trifle not with Him in whose hands your life is, and whose are all your ways. He who must play the fool, had better do it with some fellow fool, and not parade his folly before “Him that rides upon the heavens by His name JAH.” Think, then, dear Friends, of vows violated and blush because of them!  
Moreover, it seems to me—and I shall leave it to your judgment to consider and approve what I say—that every man ought to be ashamed of not loving the Lord Jesus Christ and not trusting such a Savior as the Lord Jesus Christ is. God in human flesh, bleeding, dying, bearing the penalty of human sin and then presenting Himself freely as our Sacrifice and saying that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life! Do you push Him away from you? Will you trample on His blood and count it an unholy thing? Will you despise His Cross? It sometimes seems to me that blasphemy and adultery and murder— tremendous evils though these are—scarcely reach the height of guilt that comes through refusing the great love of Christ—thrusting Him aside whom God took from His bosom and gave up to die that men might live through Him! If you must spite anybody, spite anybody but the Christ of God! If you mean to refuse a friend, refuse any friend but the bleeding Savior who spared not His very life, but poured out the floods from His heart that He might save the guilty!  
So, you see, dear Friends, that he who loves not Christ, and trusts not Christ, has good cause to be ashamed.  
I will not say any more upon this first point, except just one thing and that is, a man ought to be ashamed who will not even think of these things. There are great numbers of our fellow citizens in London and our fellow creatures all the world over who have resolved not to think about religion at all. There stands the House of God, but on that same street there is hardly one person who ever enters it. There is a Bible in almost every house, but many, nowadays, will not read it, or try to understand it. I should have thought that common and idle curiosity alone might have made men anxious to understand the Christian religion, the way of salvation by a crucified Savior. I should have fancied that they would have strayed in to see what our worship was like. If it had been the worship of Mumbo Jumbo, they would have wanted to see that, but when it is the worship of the Lord God Almighty and of His Son, Jesus Christ, the multitudes seem to be utterly indifferent to it! From the Cross I hear my dying Master cry, “Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold, and see if there is any sorrow like My sorrow.” Even the voice of His gaping wounds and the voice of His bloody sweat, and the voice of His broken heart seem to fall upon hearts that will not listen and upon ears that are as deaf as stones!  
Many who come to hear the Gospel go their way to their farms and to their merchandise, but they care nothing for Him who is worth more than all beside. O Sirs, in that day when this solid earth shall rock and reel, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, when the stars shall fall like the leaves of autumn and when there shall sail into the sky, conspicuous to the gaze of all, the Great White Throne, and on it shall sit the despised Redeemer, you will repent, then, and regret when it is too late that you gave Him none of your thoughts, but put the affairs of religion wholly on the side! Investigate this matter, I charge you! By what your Immortal souls are worth, by an eternal Heaven and an endless Hell—and there are both of these, despite what some say—I charge you, as I shall meet you at the Judgment Seat, and would be clear of your blood—give earnest attention to the things that make for your peace and consider the claims of God and of His Christ! And seek to find the way of salvation by faith in Jesus.  
Thus, surely, I have said enough upon this first point—ungodly men have good cause to be ashamed.  
II. Now, secondly, concerning these ungodly people, let me show you that SHAME IS A VERY DESIRABLE THING IF IT DRIVES THEM TO GOD. Hence the prayer, “Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O Lord.”  
I have known shame to drive men to God in various ways. Sometimes shame attends the breaking up of self-righteousness. I knew a young fellow who had been a very upright moral man all his days. He seemed to think that he should go to Heaven by his good works, but he had no notion of a Savior and no regard for the things of Christ. One day, being in the workshop, he upset an oil can and his boss, who was rather a badtempered man, enquired sharply who had wasted the oil. And this man, who had always, till then, been truthful, on this occasion told a lie and said that he did not upset the can. Nobody found him out, mark you—he was so highly respected that his employer fully believed that he had not done it—but he went down greatly in his own esteem. He said to me, “Sir, my righteousness went all to pieces in a moment. I knew that I had told a lie. I felt disgusted with myself and when I got out of the shop, for the first time in my life, I cried to God for mercy, for I saw myself to be a sinner.” Now I do not wish any of you to commit further sin in order that you may realize your true condition in God’s sight! You have done already enough evil, without doing any more, but I would like some one of these sins to come so sharply home to you that it would make you feel ashamed and give up all pretence of self-righteousness—and come by faith to Christ and take His righteousness to be your perfect covering before God.  
I have known this shame to operate in some, when they have done wrong, and have lost the reputation they enjoyed among their fellow creatures. They have been found out in doing wrong and, sad as it was to them, yet when they felt that they could no longer come to the front and lead as they used to do—when they knew that they must get somewhere in the rear and that if their true character became known, people would shun them—then it was that, like the prodigal son, they said, “I will arise and go to my Father.” There is many a man who stands high in popular esteem, but who is never likely to be saved, for he is too proud and selfconceited ever to seek the Savior. But there have been some others who, for a grave fault, have had all their glory trailed in the mire and

 then they have sought the face of Christ. I do not care how or why they seek that blessed face, so long as they find it and are saved!  
There are two instances, then, in which shame drives men to God. First, when a man has lost his own good opinion of himself. And next when he has lost the good opinion of others. Filled with shame, he has often fled to Christ.  
So have I also seen it in the case of failure driving a man to the Strong for strength. There is a young man who has come lately from the country. He knew the temptations of London, but he said to his father and mother, “You will never hear of your son John doing such things.” Ah, John! They have not heard of it, yet, but you have done a great many evil things by now and you ought to be ashamed! If your father finds it out, as likely enough he will, you will be ashamed. But, seeing that you have found yourself out, I wish that you would be ashamed before the Lord! O that virtuous John, that silent youth, that dear young man! You were just going to join the Church, were you not? Where were you last night? Ah, not drinking of the Communion cup, I will guarantee you! Where are you now? O John, if you could have seen yourself six months ago, to be what you now are, you would not have held your head so high when you came away from your native town! But your failure, that wretched broken back of yours with which you meant to stand so bolt upright should all help to drive you to God—your father’s God and your mother’s God!  
My dear Friend, I pray you seek the face of the Most High and begin again, for, John, though you cannot stand by yourself, God can make you stand! With a new heart and a right spirit, you can do a deal better than you have done in the past in your own strength, which is utter weakness. I have known a teetotaler who has felt himself quite safe because he wore a blue ribbon, to become a drunk, notwithstanding that very desirable badge. If that is your case, my Brother, when you are ashamed of yourself on that account, as well you may be, go to the Lord for a new heart and a right spirit, and then begin again, that you may truly be what you aspire to be, an example to others! So, you see, that shame in such a case of failure as I have described, may bring a man to Christ.  
I have also known men brought to Christ with shame of another sort— shame of mental terror leading to a humble faith. A young gentleman felt that he had heard the old-fashioned Gospel long enough and he should like to go and hear the new gospel. More light is said to have broken out of late—I can only tell you that it comes from some very dark places—and I do not think there is much light in it. But this gentleman thought that he must know about this new light, and he has kept going further and further. And the new light has led him, like the will-o’-the-wisp does, into all sorts of boggy places. And now he begins to feel that he can do a great many things which once he dared not do, until suddenly the thought occurs to him, “Where have I got to now?” He has become altogether an unbeliever! He who was once almost persuaded to be a Christian has run into very wild ways and nothing is sure with him! It is all rocking to and fro before him, like the waves of the sea, and there is nothing solid left. Ah, now you begin to be ashamed, do you? You are not, after all, so full of wisdom as you thought you were! Come back, then! Come back and believe the old Book, and trust the Savior who has brought so many to the Eternal Kingdom! Believe His Words, follow in His track and this very shame on account of your fancied intellectual prowess, which has turned out to be sheer folly, will bind you, in future, to the simple Cross of Christ and you will never go away from it again!  
I want to suggest one thing more before I leave this part of my subject. In this congregation there must be a good many men and women who might do well to look back upon the utter uselessness of their past lives. As I looked along these galleries, at the immense preponderance of men in the congregation, which is so usual with us, I thought, “What a number there must be here who, if they threw the weight of their influence in with us, and sought to do good to others, would be immensely valuable to the Church of God!” But are there not many, perhaps even professing Christianity, who, in looking back upon their past lives, will be obliged to say that they have done nothing? What did you ever accomplish, dear Friends? There was a lady who had a large sum of money in her possession—much more than sufficient for her needs. She was a Christian woman, living a quiet, comfortable life by the seaside. One night, as she walked up and down the beach, she said to herself, “What have I ever done for Him who died for me? If I were to die now, would anybody miss me? When my life is finished, shall I have accomplished anything?” She felt that she had done nothing, so she went home and ruminated upon what she could do.  
She began to live very frugally that she might save all she could and she accumulated quite a large amount, for she had an objective to live for. The Orphanage at Stockwell is the outcome of that good woman’s thought at the seaside! She consecrated her substance to the starting of a home where boys and girls, whose fathers were dead, might be housed. I cannot but think of her and then say to myself, “Are there not many ladies, many gentlemen, many men, many women, who might walk up and down and say, ‘Well, now, when I die, who will miss me?’” I believe that there are numbers of people who call themselves Christians who might be tied hand and foot and flung into the Atlantic—and nobody would miss them beyond the two or three members of their own families. They do nothing and they are living for nothing. “Oh, but,” they say, “we are accumulating money!” Yes, yes. That is like a jackdaw hiding rubbish behind the door, putting away everything he can get. Poor jackdaw! That is what you are doing, nothing more! To get money is well enough, if you get it that you may use it well. And to learn is right enough, if you learn with the view of teaching others. If our life is not to be wasted, there must be a living to God with a noble purpose! And they who have lived in vain with multitudes of opportunities of doing good, ought to be ashamed—and such shame should bring them to the Savior’s feet in humble penitence. God give such shame as that to any here who ought to have it, that they may at once seek the name of the Lord!  
III. I must close by speaking only briefly upon the last head of my discourse, which is, THE LORD IS WILLING, NOW, TO RECEIVE THOSE WHO ARE ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES. Let me say that again. The Lord is waiting and willing, now, to receive to the love of His heart those who are thus ashamed of themselves.  
I do not think that I need say much to enforce this great Truth of God. Is there one person here who is ashamed of himself because of his past sin? Then you are the man I invite to come to that Savior who bore your shame in His own body on the Cross! You are the sort of man for whom He died. Remember how He, Himself, said, “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” And one mark of the lost is their deep sense of shame when they get to be so ashamed of themselves that they try to hide from the gaze of their fellow creatures. If you are ashamed of yourself, Christ is willing to receive you! Behold, He stands before you with open arms and bids you come and trust Him, that He may give you rest.  
You are the sort of man to come to Christ, because, first, you have the greatest need of Him. In the time of famine, we give the meal, away, first to the most hungry family. He who has alms to distribute to the poor, if he is wise, will give the most speedy relief to those who are the most destitute. And you, my dear Hearer, are like that if you are ashamed of yourself! You are the bankrupt, you are the beggar, you are the sort of sinner whom Jesus came to save! God’s elect are known by this mark—in their own natural estate they are as poor as poverty, itself. If you are empty, there is a full Christ for you! If your last mite is gone, Heaven’s treasures are all open for you! Come and take them, take them freely, as freely as you breathe the air, as freely as you would drink of the flowing river! Come and take Christ without question and without delay! Take Him, now, and be happy! And the way to take Him is to trust Him, to trust yourself with Him absolutely! He is a Savior—let Him save you. Have no finger in the work, yourself, but leave it all to Him. Commit yourself entirely and absolutely to those mighty hands that molded the heavens and the earth—to those dear hands that were nailed to the Cross! Jesus can save you! He will save you! He must save you! He is pledged to save you! If you have believed in Him, He has saved you and you may go your way and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!  
Next, if you are ashamed of yourself, you are the man to come to Christ because you will make no bargains with Him. You will say, “Save me, Lord, at any price, and in any way!” And you are the man who will give Him all the glory if you are saved. That is the kind of sinner Jesus loves to save—not one who will run away with the credit of his salvation and say, “I was always good and I had many traces of an excellent character about me before Christ saved me.” Such a man might try to divide with the Lord the glory of his salvation, so he is not likely to be saved! But God delights to save those in whom there is no trace of goodness, no hope of goodness, no shadow of goodness—the men and women who not only feel that God may well be ashamed of them, but who are absolutely ashamed of themselves!  
In preaching on this important theme, I have not used any grace of diction, nor have I made any display of oratory. I have plainly told you the Gospel message and I have expostulated with those of you who have not considered it. I wish that, by the Grace of God, even before this night passes away, you would come and rest yourselves on Christ. The Holy Spirit is here, blessedly working upon some hearts. If He is not yet working upon others of you, I pray that He may now begin to do so. Remember, my dear Hearers, that you are all mortal and some of you may soon be gone from the earth. During the past week I personally have lost some very choice friends who died quite suddenly. There was a young friend, who was here a Sabbath or so ago. He was taken ill last Sunday afternoon and he was gone in a few hours. His sorrowing friends are absent, today, for he was laid in Norwood Cemetery yesterday afternoon, almost to the breaking of the hearts of his parents and other relatives.

I had a dear old friend with whom I have often stayed at Mentone. On Monday last she seemed as well as ever, but on Wednesday she, too, was dead. Last Friday week I had a letter from a friend at Plymouth, saying that he was coming up to see me and asking at what hour I could meet him? I said, “Five in the afternoon.” It was our honored friend, Mr. Serpell. He did not come, but I received a note to say that he was not quite well. On Monday he addressed the Chamber of Commerce and while he was speaking, he fell back, apparently in a fainting fit, and so died. I have, therefore, lost some who have always been good helpers and kind friends to me. And I seem to feel more than ever I did that I am living in a dying world. It might have been any one of you! It might have been myself. Come, then, and let us all seek the Lord at once! Let us each one seek Him, now. “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” God grant it, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 12; JEREMIAH 8; 9:1.**

Psalm 12:1. Help, LORD; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. The Psalm speaks of a very discouraging time and records a very dreary fact, but the Psalmist is wise and turns to God with that short, sententious prayer, “Help, Lord.”

2, 3. They speak vanity, every one, with his neighbor: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things. They will not be able to continue speaking falsely and proudly forever—a shovelful of earth from the grave-digger’s spade will silence them—and a terrible display of God’s Justice will make them speechless forever.

4, 5. Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him. That is all it is, only a puff—the biggest brag of the wicked, the most tremendous threat against the Lord’s people is but a puff, after all, and God will set His people high above all those who puff at them.

6-8. The Words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever. The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted. Now let us read in Jeremiah’s prophecy, Chapter Eight. Remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, that Jeremiah had the very sorrowful task of warning a people who would not give heed to his warnings. He prophesied evil—evil which began to come upon the people even while he prophesied, yet they would not turn to God! I sometimes think Jeremiah was the greatest of all the Prophets because, in the teeth of perpetual opposition, with no measure of success whatever, he continued to be faithful to God and to deliver the message with which he was sent, weeping all the while over people who would not weep for themselves.

Jeremiah 8:1, 2. At that time, says the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the Prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of their graves: and they shall spread them before the sun and the moon, and all the host of Heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. This is an awful picture. Here is a nation that would worship the sun, and the moon, and the stars, instead of worshipping God. Here they are, and their bones lie exposed to the sun and moon and stars which they had worshipped—dead people before lifeless gods! This is all that idolatry produces for the ruined people who have turned away from their true Friend and Helper—their bones lie exposed in the presence of the things that they made to be their gods! How dreadful is the result of sin! No matter what modern preachers say, a sinful course must be a disastrous one. It is in the very nature of things that we cannot go the wrong road and yet be happy. Wrong must end in wrong, it cannot be otherwise—the universal conviction in the conscience of man teaches us this fact.

3. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places where I have driven them, says the LORD of Hosts. These people would not have God. They cast Him off and now He casts them so far off that they feel that it would have been better for them if they had never been born, and they would rather die than live—“Death shall be chosen rather than life.”

4. Moreover you shall say to them, Thus says the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? Shall he turn away, and not return? The old proverb says, “It is a long lane that has no turning.” So the Lord seems to ask, “Will these men always go on in sin? Will they always turn away from Me? They change from bad to worse; will they never change from worse to better?”

5. Why, then, is this people of Jerusalem slid back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. Perseverance in evil is the very venom of evil. When men not only backslide, but continue to perpetually backslide, they are doubly staining their garments in the scarlet of iniquity! When men “refuse to return” to the Lord and continue to refuse to return, surely they are digging their own graves exceedingly deep.

6. I hearkened and heard.—It is God who is speaking—“I hearkened and heard.”—  
6. But they spoke not aright. “I tried to discover whether there was any good in them. I listened to hear them offer a prayer. I watched to mark anything like repentance in them.”  
6. No man repented of wickedness, saying, What have I done? Everyone turned to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle. See how God described these people? When He might have expected that some of them would relent and, in their thoughtful moments turn to a better mind, they did not do so. But, as the horse, when he hears the war trumpet, rushes into the midst of the fray, so did these people go headlong into sin with desperate resolve. Careless of wounds and death, they rushed to their destruction! I hope that this is not the case with any of my hearers at this time. I pray God that it may not be so!  
7. Yes, the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the LORD. The birds take wing across the sea when the dampness of autumn comes and, by-and-by, when spring returns, they twitter about our roofs, again, punctual to the appointed time. But men come not to God in their season—they fly not from their sins, they return not to the Lord. The crane and the swallow rebuke the foolishness of men who know not the time to return to God, and know not their way back to Him.  
8, 9. How can you say, We are wise, and the Law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the Word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? This test may serve as a motto for some, in these days, who believe themselves to be wiser than Scripture and who fancy that, in their great wisdom, they are able to correct this Inspired Book! Many set up in the trade of “Bible makers” nowadays—they profess to be the revealers of Revelation, the improvers of this blessed Book of God. Ah, but this passage still stands true, “They have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?”  
10, 11. Therefore will I give their wives to others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for everyone from the least even to the greatest is given to covetousness, from the Prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. This is a very mischievous thing. For the preacher of Christ to be honest and fearless, and to speak unpalatable Truth is right in God’s sight. But to gloss over the great facts about sin and judgment, and to say to the ungodly, “Oh, do not trouble yourselves! ‘Peace, peace; when there is no peace’”—this is to murder the souls of men! And I doubt not that the blood of multitudes will be upon the skirts of those teachers who have tried to make everything pleasant to the wicked, and to suit the age in which they lived. The Lord Himself says of the Prophet and priest who have dealt falsely, “They have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”  
12. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush. What a striking expression is this! To what a condition of shameless obstinacy have men’s minds been brought when it can be said of them, “They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.” The very power to be ashamed was taken from them. Surely, almost the last ray of any hope of salvation must be gone from the man who cannot blush at the thought of his own iniquity!  
12-18. Therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, says the LORD. I will surely consume them, says the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them. Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defended cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God has put us to silence, and given us water to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble! The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein. For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, says the LORD. When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Because the people refused this testimony, because they seemed set on mischief and resolved to die, therefore the Prophet’s heart was faint within him.

19, 20. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of My people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in her? Why have they provoked Me to anger with their engraved images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. I will read that 20th verse again—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” This may be the lament of some of my present hearers—and if it is, may they now bow before the Lord in true penitence of heart, and may He, in pity, save them this very hour! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, but, oh, may they soon be saved!

21. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment has taken hold on me. That is the man to be God’s Prophet, the man who makes the sorrows of his people to be his own sorrows, who does not perform the duties of his office as a mere matter of profession, but enters into his service with a weeping heart, longing to be made a blessing to men.

22. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? No, there is none. There is balm in Christ, there is a Physician who once hung on Calvary’s Cross—but there is no balm and no physician in Gilead. If there were—

22. Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Jeremiah 9:1. Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! This is how God’s servants feel about the dying and perishing souls all around them. They cannot bear the thought of the sinner’s awful doom—it brings continuous heartbreak and heaviness of spirit upon them. That men should eternally perish—that they should bring on their own heads the doom of their own sin is no small thing and, therefore, the Lord’s servant mourns over those who mourn not for themselves! God save every one of us, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—552, 544, 521, 522.  
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Sermon #2367 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S HIDDEN ONES  
NO. 2367

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 1, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1888.

**“Your hidden ones.”  
Psalm 83:3.**

IT was the desire of Asaph to obtain for his nation help from God. Israel was exposed to great danger—ten confederate nations had conspired, with desperate hate, to assail the chosen people. They were determined to root out the very name of Israel from among the nations! They joined together in a wicked league for this purpose and they came from all quarters—north, south, east and west—in order to utterly devour the little insignificant people whom God had called His own. It was the Psalmist’s desire to bring God into this quarrel, to stir Him up to take the part of Israel and he, therefore cried, “Keep not Your silence, O God: hold not Your peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate You have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted against Your hidden ones.”

Nothing stirs a man more than when his children are assailed. The most quiet and inoffensive individual grows angry if his little one is touched. The blood flies to his cheeks and all his manhood is awakened to defend his child. So the Psalmist pleads with God that this nation was His own and that, therefore, He must protect it. And he describes the people by this singular but instructive title, “Your hidden ones.” I am going to enquire what may be meant by this term, “Your hidden ones,” in the desire that some of God’s hidden ones may be discovered, and that the Lord’s blessing may rest upon them. First, I shall ask, Why are they called God’s hidden ones? Secondly, What is their special honor? They are God’s hidden ones, they belong to Him and, thirdly, What then?

I. First, then, Why are they called God’s hidden ones?  
I think, in the connection in which these words occur, the phrase means that they were hidden by God with a view to safety. The 10 heathen nations conspired against Israel, but they could not really harm the chosen people, for God, Himself had hidden them as a hen hides her chickens under her wings when a hawk hovers overhead, or as one who has found a treasure hides it away from the hands of the thief. As the most precious things are put into cases and kept concealed for safety, so does God hide away His people and preserve them. God puts His saints where the enemy cannot find them, or, if he finds them so as to see where they are, God places them where the enemy cannot reach them. Sometimes He puts them in the secret places of His pavilion—yes, in the secret places of His tabernacle does He hide them. As well might the devil think to destroy an angel as to destroy a child of God! That same power that protects the perfect ones before the Throne of God protects believing ones who are on the way there. “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations,” and such a dwelling place that we have been hidden away in You so that no evil has been able to reach us!  
You remember when Athaliah sought to kill all the seed royal that Jehoiada, the High Priest, took Joash, who was then a child, and hid him for six years in the house of the Lord, and there He was safe? Thus does God take each one of His children and make a Joash of him, and preserves him from the assault of the enemy so that he cannot be destroyed. God said to Noah, “Come, you and all your house, into the ark,” and he and his household went into the ark and the Lord shut them in. They were hidden in that ark of safety from the floods which rose from beneath and the rain which fell from above—and thus they outlived the Deluge. So, if you believe in Jesus, God will hide you away from all the rage of earth and Hell. He will preserve you, you shall be one of His hidden ones, of whom Christ said, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me; is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” They are God’s hidden ones. As the king takes care of his royal diadem and crown jewels, so does God watch over those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. “They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.” What a privilege is yours and mine, dear Hearers, if, indeed, we have so believed in Christ that we are hidden away in Him! “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Rightly do we sing—  
*“How blest are they who still abide  
Close sheltered in Your bleeding side!  
Who life and strength from there derive, And by You move, and in You live.”*  
I think this is the first reason why the Israelites were called God’s hidden ones, because He had put them out of the reach of their adversaries and concealed them in a place of safety.  
But, next, I think there is another meaning which some of us have, at times, realized. They are God’s hidden ones because He gives them quiet and peace, even in the midst of turmoil and sorrow. The Psalmist seems to say, “Your enemies make a tumult, but Your hidden ones are quiet.” Do you not know what this experience means? Have you ever felt it? That trouble you dreaded so much, of which you said, “I am sure it will crush me,” would have crushed you if you had been left to yourself! But when it came, you were strangely upheld and kept so calm and placid that you did not know yourself! When you saw your husband die and those little children were all around you, and you knew that you were a widow, how was it that then you were still so trustful? Or, dear Husband, when you saw your wife, at last, expire, and the light of your home was quenched, how was it that you still said and meant it, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”? Why, it was because the Lord had made you one of His hidden ones! He said, “Come home, dear child, come and rest with Me”—and He shut you away from all the trial and enabled you to find peace in Him.  
Do you remember that wonderful poem by Miss Havergal, in which she speaks of the peculiar calm which prevails at the very center of a cyclone? The gifted poetess writes—  
*“They say there is a hollow, safe and still, A point of coolness and repose  
Within the center of a flame where life might dwell Unharmed and unconsumed, as in a luminous shell Which the bright walls of fire enclose  
In breathless splendor, barrier that no foes Could pass at will.  
There is a point of rest  
At the great center of the cyclone’s force, A silence at its secret source.  
A little child might slumber undistracted, Without the ruffle of one fairy curl,  
In that strange central calm amid the mighty whirl.”*Well now, some of us have, at times, known the experience which is typified in those lines. Troubles of every sort and size come upon us. We are vexed with every form of calamity and yet during all that time we are serenely quiet and perfectly happy. I should think that an eagle, high aloft, when he sees the sportsman coming with his gun, however far the bullet may carry, if he knows himself to be quite out of range, would poise himself upon the wing and look down upon the sportsman with a merry heart! Let him send his bullet up into the air as far as it can rise, but the eagle is high above it all—and God gives His children, at times, such mounting faith that they rise up as upon the wings of eagles—and the bullets of trouble cannot reach halfway to them! There, in the clear blue Heaven of fellowship with God, they look down on the tops of the clouds, and defy all the assaults of man! Happy are they who have thus become God’s hidden ones!  
There are green meadows and there are still waters, but I believe they are mostly to be found in the places where trials most abound! There, consolations are most plentiful. I hardly think that a man knows the deeps of the serenity of God unless he has been greatly tried. There are wonderful sights that none shall see but those who are hidden away by the Lord in the time of storm and trouble. Oh, the strife of tongues, the endless babbling of slander! What a blessing not to hear it, or to hear it as a deaf man that hears not. Oh, the noise of misrepresentation! Oh, the wave upon wave of actual trouble that may come to you in business or in the domestic circle! What joy it is to be kept out of it all, as I said before, like Noah in the ark—all the world drowned, but you shut up in safety! And remember that the deeper the floods became, the higher Noah rose toward Heaven! And so shall it be with you. The more of trial you have to endure, the more of communion you shall have to enjoy! This is the happy, happy case of a tried child of God.

There are two meanings, then, of this expression—hidden away for safety and hidden away for quiet.  
But, next, God’s people may be hidden away because they are not understood. The true Christian is a marvel to other men. He is a stranger and a foreigner among them. He is a plant that never would have grown on earthly mold unless God had planted it there. The Christian is a man wondered at! If you are understood, you are in the wrong. If you are a genuine Christian and are right, you will be misunderstood by the world—it has not the faculty of understanding the saints. He who has been made to live unto God lives a life that is quite incomprehensible to ordinary men. No, let me put it very plainly—the spiritual life which God gives to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is altogether beyond the discernment of the carnal mind! “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” and cannot rise to an understanding of that which is born of the Spirit, which, alone, is spirit! Your life is a secret between God and yourself.  
So, too, the motive of your life will not be understood by other men. They feel sure that there is something at the back of it. If you were to tell them that you lived only for God’s Glory, they would laugh at you! God’s Glory—what is that to them? They think, no doubt, that you make a good thing out of your religion, and herein they prove themselves to have learned their lesson in the school of the devil, for he said, “Does Job fear God for naught? Have not You made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has, on every side?” The desire to live so as to please God belongs to every man who walks with God, but it will not be understood by other men. God’s people are, in this sense, His hidden ones.  
Therefore, the comfort that reigns in a Christian’s heart is a thing which he cannot impart to others. If others were to hear the reason of the Believer’s happiness, they would say, “Well, that would not make me happy! There is nothing in it that would sustain me.” And there isn’t. The food on which angels live is not such as common flesh and blood could feed upon. And the inward comforts of the child of God are such as the world cannot give because it cannot even understand them. So your hopes and the lamps that light up your life, the world knows nothing about! Perhaps some of your own brothers and sisters do not understand your hopes. And when you talk about death with pleasure, and about the eternal state with delight, they think that you are half insane! It is because they are altogether insane that they think so. But if you are one of God’s hidden ones, in all these points you will be a stranger to your own mother’s children—you will be one who cannot be understood! Do not expect to be understood—settle this in your mind and it will save you a great deal of heartache and disappointment. There is a third sense, then, in which God’s children may be called hidden ones, because they are not understood.  
But there are some of them who are hidden in another sense—they are very obscure. Some of God’s best children have not anything that can bring them to the light here on earth. Perhaps they may be living among rich people and, as they are very poor, nobody notices them. There is a directory containing the names and addresses of the great people who live in the town, but they have not put poor Mary’s name in that book— and as to John, well, the highest degree he ever had was that he was a cobbler—and his name, of course, is not in the book, either. The Lord has many of those hidden ones who are not known among the great because they are so little in Israel.  
Some of God’s hidden ones are not known because they are ill. It is now several months that poor Mary has been lying on a bed. It is years since William has gone out of the house, at all, and very few ever come to see these hidden ones. But I bear my witness that some of the best things I have ever learned from mortal lips, I have learned from bedridden saints! There are some who wickedly teach that bodily afflictions are caused by sin. It is a cruel—I was going to say, an infernal supposition— for some of the holiest people I have known have been bedridden for ten, twelve, or 15 years, and if I were to say that I thought they were sinners above others, I should belie my convictions, for in sitting down to talk with some of them I have found them to be saints above others! I shall never forget going some miles, years ago, to see a woman who had been bedridden for, I think, 20 or 25 years. I went up a ladder to the room where she was. She was rendered comfortable by the kindness of those who came to see her. She sat up in bed as best she could and, oh, I wish that I could preach such sermons as she preached to me when she spoke about the goodness of the Lord to her, and told me how that poor chamber was made to glow in the middle of the night with the delightful Presence of her Lord! She was one of God’s hidden ones—and He has many such! Now, just think of that a minute, and pray God to bless His dear hidden sick ones at this moment, and ask Him to cheer and comfort their hearts.  
Perhaps there are some hidden ones who come into our places of worship and have no one to speak to them. I do not think that many such persons come to the Tabernacle—I hope there never will be. There is a Brother who was a member, here, and who will be a member, again. He has gone to live in the suburbs and he attends a very respectable place of worship. They are very good people but, you know, our friends in the suburbs are so much more respectable than we are and they know it, too! And there, in the outer ring of London, it is perfectly amazing what great people they are—you would not believe it. When they come into the City to business, they are nothing very particular, but as soon as they get out to the suburbs, they are wonderful people! This Brother says, “I have been in and out of the chapel for months and nobody ever speaks to me.” The fact is, I expect, that he keeps a grocer’s shop and some of these people deal with him, so they do not know him on Sunday, of course, because he is only a grocer!  
I hope that you will never get such abominable notions into your heads! This wretched caste that divides us up into little sets, reminds me of the Hindus. Keep it up in the world if you are foolish enough to do so, but do not bring the evil into the Church of Christ! Here, at any rate, we are Brothers and Sisters. Let us feel that we are one in Christ and put away from us all that stiffness which would make us keep our petty nobodies to ourselves! If there is a man who is a really great man, I always notice that he is the most condescending and gentle man that there is. But it is your nobody who always makes himself appear somebody! Now, dear Friend, if you have come in and out of this place and you have not been noticed by anybody, I pray you to begin to notice somebody, yourself! And if you have come in and out of any place of worship and nobody has spoken to you, remember that the Lord has His hidden ones and you may be one of them. It may be that quite from inadvertence, not from unkindness, you have not been spoken to, so begin to break the ice, yourself, by speaking to someone else and may God bless you so that you may, in that sense, be no more a hidden one!  
Now I ask you to think, for a minute, of another way in which some of God’s people are hidden ones. I mean this—do you suppose that God has none of His people in churches and communities that are steeled in error? If you think so, I do not! It is always a comfort to my heart to believe that in the great Romish Church there are hundreds of thousands who have found the Savior and are resting in His atoning Sacrifice—they are God’s hidden ones. I have, here and there, stumbled upon some of these, myself. And when we have come to speak about the Cross and the wounds of Christ and His precious blood—all that rubbish about the Virgin and the saints has been forgotten—and I have found myself much nearer akin to those hidden ones than I had thought I might have been! And there are many books that have been written by persons who are members of that church which, nevertheless, are full of such a savor of Grace and holy fellowship with God that we cannot but believe that the authors of them are God’s hidden ones. Yes, and it is a very curious thing that you will find that just the very persons you would have least thought would possess the Light of God have, nevertheless, received it. Have I not been, sometimes, in a place where I thought the Gospel of Christ had never come and yet I have found clear proofs that it was there? Not long ago it was so with me. As I passed a certain spot, I noticed a kind of glitter in the eye of a person who looked at me. It was a servant in a place where I could not have thought I should find a friend. And when I came back that way, his greeting to me, was, “God bless you, Sir! You don’t know me, but I take in the sermons every week and I have found the Savior.” Where least I expected it, I stumbled on a friend and a disciple who was fed on the Word of God that I have preached! Does it not do your heart good, sometimes, after you have thought, “Well, I shall never find anybody here with whom I can sympathize,” to meet with just one of the very persons with whom you have had the best of fellowship for many a day and many a year to come?  
God has His hidden ones, also, in the midst of ungodly families. Do not you, who have to visit those who are joining the Church, sometimes find yourselves in houses where everything betokens drunkenness and all that is bad—and yet there is a dear child who has been converted, or perhaps it is the wife whom God, in Sovereign Grace, has looked upon and saved? There are many such hidden ones in London. There are some of them who cannot get out to worship—they are not permitted to come— and yet they are God’s own dear ones, hidden away in ungodly homes. Breathe a prayer for them, now! Say, “Lord, help Your hidden ones in such cases as these!” God has a people—I was going to say, up to the very gates of Hell—He has an elect people, chosen by His Grace, who know Him, trust Him and love Him although they are not known to the rest of their Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Once more, however, all God’s people are His hidden ones because all the saints are, at present, unrevealed. “It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear,” that is, the hidden and veiled Christ, when He shall be manifested, “we shall be like He,” we shall be manifested, too! There is a great future for you, my Brother! There is a grand future for you, my Sister. Hardly can you hold your own, today, against the contentions of the adversary, but be firm, be true, cry to God for help and you shall not always be hidden as you now are, in the midst of the dust, strife and conflict—you shall come out as when the sun shines in his strength! Therefore, be of good cheer, you who are hidden ones, today—you shall, in due time, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.  
II. I must not say more upon the first point, but must turn to the second question. WHAT IS THEIR SPECIAL HONOR? They are God’s hidden ones. Their peculiar honor is that they are the Lord’s.  
Will each one of you do himself the favor to put to himself the question, “Am I the Lord’s?” Never mind about the friend sitting next to you, but let each of you say, “Am I the Lord’s?” If so, the Lord knows you, for, “the Lord knows them that are His.” He knows whom He chose and redeemed. He knows whom He has called. He knows whom He has justified. He has not done any of those things in the dark. He has a familiar acquaintance with all that His Grace has done for you.  
Remember, also, that though you are hidden, you are not hidden from the Lord. You are hidden by Him, but you are not hidden from Him. He can read your thoughts. He sees that hot tear that is beginning to lift the eyelid. He knows the troubles that are yet to come as well as those that have come—He reads you as I read the pages of this Bible. Then, again, some of God’s hidden ones are among the very choicest of His children. I think there are some who are so very dear to God that He keeps them to Himself. I have known some saints whom God has loved so much that He has taken away from them all that they loved, that He might have all their hearts. He loved their love so much that He would have it all Himself. “Oh!” you say, “perhaps that is the reason why I have been so tried and why I have so many graves in the cemetery.” Well, it may be—and that you are one of the Lord’s hidden ones whom He has hidden away in His own bosom from every other love—that you may be altogether His own.  
Remember, too, that hidden as you are, He has engaged to keep you. His very hiding of you shows that He means to keep you in safety. You shall never perish for, “He keeps the feet of His saints.” You shall not be overcome by the enemy, for you are the Lord’s. If you belonged to somebody else, you might be deserted. But as you are the Lord’s, you never shall be forsaken. Human masters sometimes leave their old servants to perish, but God never deserts His old servants! Even to hoar hairs and to the end of life He will be with you, and He will bear you until He brings you Home to Glory, above, to be with Him forever and ever! III. I have spoken very briefly on the second point, but our time is nearly gone, so I must close with this third question. If the Lord has the hidden ones of whom we have spoken, WHAT THEN?  
Well, the first thought that comes to my mind is this—let us rejoice that the Lord has more people than we know. He has His hidden ones. I know the tendency to say, as Elijah did, “I, even I, only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” It is not so—the Lord still has many thousands of knees that have not bowed to Baal. One of the wonders of Heaven will be to find so many people, there, that we never thought would get there. We shall say to ourselves, “We did not think that those people knew the Lord, yet they did!” The Grace of God can live where you and I could not. I know some people that I would not like to live with on earth, for they are very strange, yet I hope that they are God’s people. Well, we shall live with them very well in Heaven—they will be changed before they get there. They will have had their hearts washed, their whole natures renewed and they will be right enough, then! The Lord has some very strange people among His chosen ones. If you had to deal with some of God’s people that I know, you would give me credit for a little patience, at any rate, in dealing with them! You have need of patience with your own children and God’s children are, in some respects, very much like our children. If you draw a parallel between them, you will find childish faults and infirmities in the children of God which have to be borne with, even as we have to bear with the faults and infirmities of our own children at home.  
My next remark is—let us be on the look out for these hidden ones wherever we are. If you and I have to go and live where we do not wish to go—away from our dear acquaintances, here—let us believe, when we get to that distant place, wherever it is, that God has some hidden ones there. You are going to Canada, are you? Or you are about to start for Australia? Or, in the Providence of God, you are to live in some village far away from the means of Grace. You say to yourself, “Whatever shall I do?” Do? Why, find the Lord’s hidden ones and you shall have company! Though you may say, “Surely, there is no child of God there,” you shall find that there is someone living there whom you are sent to help—while he is placed there that he may help you! Wherever you go, do not say to yourself, “This place is wholly abandoned,” but believe that there is a child of God living there.  
I remember reading of a godly man who went into a village, some fifty years ago, and asked, “Is there a Christian person living in this place?” He enquired if there was anyone in the village who made a profession of religion. They shook their heads and said that they did not know of anybody. “Is there anyone here who fears God?” Then they laughed. However, after making a good many enquiries, one man said that there was a hypocritical canting Methodist woman who lived down a certain lane. He said, “That is the person I want to meet, depend upon it.” He knew at once what they meant—there was one who was different from the rest and, therefore, she had undeservedly earned those titles! He went and found that she was a Christian woman walking in meekness and sorrow because she had no one at all to speak to.  
When our missionary, Mr. Thomas, went to Calcutta at the end of the last century, it is said that he advertised for a Christian and could not find one. Advertise for a Christian? Well, thank God, we shall not have to do that! Even if you live in a place where there are very few Christians, still believe that there are some and look out for God’s hidden ones! In the next place, since God has hidden ones, let us take care never to act or speak so as to grieve them. Sometimes, when Christian men get conceited and proud—and think themselves very great—they speak in a hard, domineering way that grieves God’s people. “No,” you say, “I would not use such language if I knew that one of them was about.” Well then, do not use it at all—because you do not know when they may not be about, for God has His hidden ones in places where it is least suspected! Speak as you would wish the very least of God’s people to hear you and do not use vain and haughty language. If you get to be like the Prophet’s bullocks that pushed with horn and shoulder and drove away the weak ones, God may deal roughly with you and make you to be as hateful in His sight as they were! Let the remembrance that God has His hidden ones be a check upon your tongue and upon your whole conduct. And, lastly, although God has His hidden ones, let not one of us hide himself more than is necessary. I speak to some of you who love the Lord, but who have never come out on His side. God has His hidden ones, but they ought to come forward and confess Christ. Remember that the Gospel message is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” To the secret faith of the heart there ought to be joined the public profession of the lips! Why should you be ashamed of Jesus? Why should you be afraid to acknowledge that you belong to Him? Some whom I know, who love their Lord but have never confessed Him, are like the mice behind the wainscot. They come out of a night, when the cat is not there, to get some of the crumbs—and then they run back and hide in their holes. I shall not set a trap for you, but, at the same time I would like to stop up all the holes where you hide, so that you who are Christians would be obliged to come out and admit it! I leave the matter to your conscience, but I pray the Lord, Himself, to fetch you out if you are His hidden ones, for His dear name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**Psalm 83.**

This is a Psalm that is not often read and very seldom expounded, I should think. According to the title, it is, “A Song or Psalm of Asaph.” Asaph is one of a little group of poets who flourished side by side with David. This is a patriotic hymn. The nation was about to be attacked by many adversaries, so, like a true patriot, the poet desired that God would give the victory to His people, and deliver them. You may regard this Psalm as a prophecy—it reads like a prayer or wish of the writer and, no doubt it is, but it may also be read as a prophecy of what will happen to the enemies of God’s people.

Verses 1, 2. Keep not Your silence, O God: hold not Your peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate You have lifted up the head. God’s enemies are making a noise and the Psalmist’s prayer is that the Lord, Himself, will speak and answer them. God’s voice made the heavens and the earth—“He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.” A single word from Him will win the day! The poet’s prayer is not, “Grant a leader bold and brave,” but, “Lord, speak, speak!” “For, lo, Your enemies make a tumult.” The enemies of Israel were the enemies of God. If they were

 our enemies, only, we might keep silent, but as they are also the enemies of God, our loyalty to the Lord compels us to cry unto Him to speak against them!

3. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted against Your hidden ones. Craft goes with power in plotting against God’s people. The seed of the serpent are like he from whom they came, and of him it is said, “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” And the seed of the serpent are full of crafty counsel and subtlety. This, the Psalmist mentions in his prayer, and then he looks to God to frustrate their minds, to baffle their craft and, by His wisdom, to save His people.

4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. So terrible was the anger of these nations against God’s people that nothing would content them but the destruction of Israel—the blotting out of its very name from the memory of men! And I am sure that if the world could have its way, it would extinguish the Church of Christ. You notice, in these days of boasted liberality and pretended charity, that the charity is only for error—for the old Gospel there is no charity! The cry concerning it is, “Let it be cut to pieces! Let it be destroyed! It is an old nuisance, put it out of the way.” This is how the enemies of God would have it, “that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”

5 . For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against You. There were many nations of heathens and they were agreed in nothing except in their hatred of Israel. There they were agreed, as Herod was the friend of Pilate while Christ was under examination, but not at any other time. The Psalmist mentions ten different nations which had banded themselves together against God’s chosen people Israel. Ten against one is heavy odds, but then God was on the side of Israel! One man with God is in the majority, however many there may be on the other side, for God counts for more than all who can be against Him!

6. The tabernacles of Edom. These descendants of Esau, Jacob’s twin brother, ought to have been the best friends of Israel, but they were the worst of their enemies. How often does it happen that kinship in blood makes no kinship in Grace! “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

6. And the Ishmaelites. These, again, were near akin to the seed of Abraham and Isaac, but the Ishmaelites were always among the most bitter enemies of Israel.

6. Of Moab. Moab was descended from a daughter of Lot.  
7. And the Hagarenes. Perhaps descended from Hagar by some other husband.  
7. Gehal, and Ammon, and Amalek. All these were hereditary enemies of Israel—Amalek especially so, for God had determined that there should be war with Amalek throughout all generations.  
7. The Philistines—These were the old enemies of Israel. Remember how Samson fought with them and what tugs of war David had with them?  
7. With the inhabitants of Tyre. What were they doing in warring against God’s people? They were merchants, shippers. Yes, but it sometimes happens that when worldly craft is in danger, men of trade and commerce can be as bitter against true religion as anybody else!  
8. Assur also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot. Selah. Here is a mention of the growing power of Assyria. What a host there was! What a band of enemies against God’s people! Oh, dear Friends, I trust that none of us will have our names written in this black list! Be not enemies of God and of His Truth, for, if so, you will wage a losing battle! Let the gunnysack fight with the flame, or the dust with the wind—they will speedily be overcome—and woe be unto the man who contends with his Maker! What can he do? Let us, Brothers and Sisters, be on God’s side. God grant, by His Grace, that we may never lift a hand against His cause! Now comes the prayer or prophecy of the poet.  
9, 10. Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon: which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth. In those great battles, the enemies of the Lord and His people were utterly cut in pieces. Mighty men as they were, they left their corpses to manure the soil.  
11. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yes, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna. These were four princes who were slain by Gideon and his allies—two of them bore the names of wolf and raven— cruel names, but war is always a cruel thing. But what had they done, these men of arms, these mighty warriors? The Psalmist tells us—  
12. Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. They were not content with their own houses—they wanted God’s houses. And there are some men who can never rest unless when they are doing mischief to the cause and Cross of Christ! Woe unto them, for the fate of Oreb and Zeeb shall be theirs in due time!  
13. O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. Or rather, “You shall make them a wheel,” never still. The real translation, I think, would be, “Make them like those light dry flowers which are blown by the wind across the plains.” Mr. Thomson, in his Land and the Book, speaks of the branches of the wild artichoke which form a sphere or globe a foot or more in diameter, and he says that he has seen thousands of them come wheeling along. Isaiah calls them, “a rolling thing before the whirlwind.” A puff of wind would come and take them in one direction and then a contrary wind would drive them in quite another direction! They are so light, downy, gossamer-like, that they never can rest. Now this is just what happens to many men who set themselves against God and His Grace. They are like rolling things never at rest— believing nothing, knowing nothing, hoping nothing, comforted by nothing—they are like a wheel. Oh, that we may never know, by personal experience, what this means! “Make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind”! You know how that is—the stubble is blown up, down, to the right, to the left, whichever way the wind blows. Are any of you like that, tonight? Have you no stability? Have you no good hope for the future? When you think about death and eternity, are you like the stubble before the wind? If so, God have mercy upon you, and bring you to the only place where you can obtain salvation and stability!  
14. As the fire burns a forest and as the flame sets the mountains on fire. Travelers tell us that they have, sometimes, seen the sides of mountains all ablaze where the timber, growing old, and everything being dry in the heat of summer, a chance spark has set the whole on fire. This is what God will do with His enemies. He will as certainly and as readily destroy them as the forest is burnt with fire, or the mountain’s side is consumed by the raging flames! Who will stand against God? Who will dare attempt it? Consider His great might and flee from His wrath!  
15. So persecute them with Your tempest. Or, “You will so follow them up with Your tempest.”  
15, 16. And make them afraid with Your storms. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD. That is the prayer which we might pray, tonight, for all those who are denying the Godhead of Christ and His great Sacrifice of the Cross—and for all who reject the Inspiration of Scripture and the blessed Doctrines of Grace. “O Lord, fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name!” Oh, that men did but know their own character! If they did but feel ashamed of their own sin, they might be led to seek the name of God.  
17. Let them be confused and troubled forever. Or rather, “They shall be confused and troubled forever.” That is an awful passage, “Confused and troubled forever.”  
17, 18. Yes, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know that You, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, are the Most High over all the earth. You notice that when I read the Scriptures, wherever I find the word, LORD, in capital letters, I read it as Jehovah, for so it should be. I wish that the translators of the Revised Version had had the courage of their convictions and had so translated it, for we need that grand name back—Jah, Jehovah. Let me entreat You never to trifle, as some do, with that sacred word, Hallelujah, or, Hallelu-Jah—praise to Jehovah!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—881, 53, 728. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2502 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GRACE AND GLORY  
NO. 2502

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 31, 1897— THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BELOVED PREACHER’S ENTRANCE INTO “GLORY.”

**DELIVERED BY C. H, SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S DAY EVENING, MAY 17, 1885.

**“The LORD will give grace and glory.”  
Psalm 84:11.**

WHEREVER, in the Old Testament, you see the word, “LORD,” in capital letters, it ought to be read, “JEHOVAH,” SO our text really is, “JEHOVAH will give grace and glory.”

Who else could give either grace or glory? But God is full of grace—His very name is Love—it is His Nature to freely dispense of His goodness to others. As it is according to the nature of the sun to shine, so it is according to the Nature of God to give good things to His creatures. In Him all fullness dwells—all grace and all glory are perpetually resident in Jehovah, the Infinite. What a mercy it is that we, poor empty sinners, have to do with a God of such fullness and of such goodness! If He were shorthanded with His love, what would become of us? If He had but little graciousness, if He had but little glory, then we great sinners must certainly perish. But since the Lord is a bottomless well of love and a topless mountain of grace, we may come to Him, and come freely, without any fear that either His grace or His glory will ever suffer any diminution.

Note again that the text says, “Jehovah will give grace and glory.” Not only has He these wondrous blessings, but He has them that He may

 give them freely. If He were to keep them to Himself, He would be none the richer, and when He distributes them, He is none the poorer! The Lord does not sell grace or glory, He does not put them up to auction to those who can give something in return for them. God is a great Giver and a great Forgiver. He gives grace and glory without money, without price and without any merit in the receiver. The Lord gives—there is nothing freer than a gift and there can be nothing freer than that greatest of all the gifts of God, eternal life! That expression, “eternal life,” sums up these two things—grace and glory. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” It is His glory to give His grace and because of His graciousness, He gives glory!

Should not this Truth of God be a comfort to anyone here who is struggling against sin and who is crying, “How shall I ever get to Heaven?” This is the answer—“The Lord will give grace and glory.” “But I am so unworthy.” “The Lord will give grace and glory.” “But I can offer Him no recompense.” There is no need of any recompense, for, “the Lord will give grace and glory.” “But I cannot procure these by any effort of my own.” You have not to procure them, for, “the Lord will give grace and glory.” O you who are full of needs and empty of everything else, come and joyfully accept the free gift of God in Christ Jesus, for, according to the text, “the Lord will give grace and glory”!

There are just two things for me to talk about at this time— the first gift and the last gift. “The Lord will give grace.” That is His first gift. “The Lord will give glory.” That is His last gift. Glory never comes without grace coming first, but grace never comes without glory coming last—the two are bound together and, “what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” He never gave grace without giving glory and He never gave glory without first giving grace. You must have the two. They must go together—you must not attempt to tear this seamless coat—“The Lord will give grace and glory.”

I. So we begin with THE FIRST GIFT—‘”The Lord will give grace.” And, first, let me say that the Lord will give grace to all those who feel that they need it and confess their need. God will not give Divine Grace to a man who boasts of his merits and who claims a reward as a debt. God will meet such a man on his own ground and deal with him on his own terms—and will give him only what he merits—and what he really deserves. And what will that be, Sirs? O you who are pharisaic and boastful of your own righteousness, listen to the answer to this question! Such a man’s deserts will be shame and confusion of face forever! Remember what Jehovah says by His servant Isaiah, “Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks. Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that you have kindled. This shall you have of My hand—you shall lie down in sorrow.”  
If you are willing to meet God on the ground of being undeserving and guilty, God will meet you on those terms and, so meeting you, He will come in robes of Divine Grace and say to you, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins.” Claim anything as of a right and God will only give you what you have a right to claim! And that will be everlasting destruction from His Presence and from the glory of His power! But confess that you are guilty! Put the rope around your neck and stand ready for the death sentence to be executed! Acknowledge that you are an undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving sinner and appeal to the unmerited mercy of God—and you shall have grace freely given to you. Put yourself where grace can come to you, that is, in the place of the guilty, the worthless—in the place of those who merit Divine Wrath and deserve nothing better—and then God will meet you in mercy, and you will prove the truth of our text, “The Lord will give grace.” Come, then, you black sinners, for “the Lord will give grace.” Come, then, you worthless ones, for “the Lord will give grace.”  
Come, then, you graceless ones, for “the Lord will give grace.” Do but be empty and He will fill you! Do but be naked and He will clothe you! Do but be hungry and He will feed you! Do but be spiritually bankrupt and he will deliver you from all your liabilities and enrich you with the boundless wealth of His grace! God cannot be gracious to a man who is not in need of Divine Grace—that were to insult Him—and until you take the sinner’s place, which is your right place, you do not stand where the free favor of God can come and deal with you. Let this Truth of God, stern as it is in some aspects, be an encouragement to confession of sin and to contrition before God, for, “the Lord will give grace” to those who need it and who confess that need.  
“The Lord will give grace,” that is to say, He will give grace to those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. No, He has given grace to them already. It has pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell and, therefore, fullness of Divine Grace abides in Christ. If you want Divine Grace, you must go to Jesus for it! As Pharaoh said to those who sought corn in Egypt, “Go to Joseph,” so does God say to those who seek His mercy, “Go to Jesus—turn to the Crucified.” He is that golden pipe through which the mercy of God flows to the guilty sons of men! Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? In other words, do you trust yourself wholly with Him? Then if you do, God has given you Divine Grace—you have salvation, you are a saved man, your sins are forgiven you—you are accepted in the Beloved. “By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” But that faith rests itself upon the completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ!  
Further, “The Lord will give grace,” that is to say, He will give more grace to those to whom He has given some grace. “The Lord will give grace.” “Oh” you say, “I have such a little grace!” Thank God that you have any. If you have only the gleam of a candle, thank God for that, and believe that you shall yet have a light like that of the seven-branched candlestick in the ancient Tabernacle! If you have had the first droppings of Divine Grace, keep on looking to Him who gave you those first drops, for there is a shower on the way! He who has grace enough to believe in Christ may say that he hears the sound of abundance of rain. ‘He gives more grace.” Do you not remember that Jesus has come, not only that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly? A little genuine grace ensures the death of all our sins and the life of all our graces! If you are brought into covenant with God by Christ Jesus, then all the Divine Grace that is in the Covenant and in the Covenant Head is yours and you may freely partake of it! If you have but a morsel of the dainties of Christ in your mouth, there stands One at the table who says to you, “Eat, O Friend. Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved!” If you are but His son, all that He has is yours and you shall, by-and-by, have, in conscious enjoyment, more Divine Grace than you have had as yet, for where He has given some grace, He delights to give more!  
“The Lord will give grace,” also means that He will give it in the form in which it is needed. “I am looking forward to a great trouble,” says one. “The Lord will give grace.” “I am about to undertake a very serious responsibility,” says another. “The Lord will give grace.” “I am getting very old,” says a third, “and infirmities are creeping over me.” “The Lord will give grace.” ‘Oh, but I am approaching the time of my death! I feel that I have received my death-wound.” “The Lord will give grace.” Whatever is to come upon a child of God, Divine Grace shall come with it. Therefore, Beloved, be not afraid, but remember those ancient promises, “Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.”  
“The Lord will give grace,” means, too, that He will give Divine Grace when it is needed. He will not give you any grace to go and show about, so that you may boastingly say, “See what a lot of grace I have!” I think I have heard some testimonies which appeared to imply that the Brother had his pockets full of gold and, as he put in his hand and rattled the coins, he seemed to say, “See what a rich man I am!” That is all wrong! God does not give us any grace to turn into diamond rings to wear on our fingers and to flash in the sunshine. He does not give us any grace that we may turn into best clothes to wear on Sundays that people may see what fine people we are. Grace is a thing which has to be used and the Lord who gives it means us to use it. Whenever God sharpens my scythe, I know that there is some grass for me to cut. If ever He hands me a sword, He seems, by that very action, to say to me, “Go and fight,” and He does not give it to me that I may have it dangling between my legs to show what a man of war I am! When you need grace, you shall have grace.  
One said in His heart just now, when we were singing that line— *“All needful grace will God bestow,”*“I am afraid I have not grace to die with.” My dear Friend, you may not be going to die just yet. When you are to die, you shall have dying grace in dying moments! I have heard one say, “I am afraid I am not a child of God, for I could not preach like So-and-So, and I could not pray like Soand-So.” But you shall have grace to do it when God calls you to it. Somebody, the other day, trying to excuse or justify war, said to me, “Did not God tell Joshua to go and kill the Canaanites?” I answered, “When God tells me to go and kill anybody, I will go and do it, but, until He does so, I will heed what our Lord said to Peter, ‘Put up your sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.’” It is a blessed thing that God gives Divine Grace to men according to their requirements. You remember the promise to Asher, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be”? That was said to men who had to go on a long journey, but you do not need iron shoes and brass shoes! If you had them given to you, as soon as you reached home you would kick them off and say, “Give me a pair of light slippers.” And God will not give us grace just for show—He will give it to us as we need it! Therefore fall back on this blessed Word of God, “The Lord will give grace.” As it is needed, so shall the grace be given.

Furthermore, we know from this precious text that He will give us Divine Grace to a much larger degree when we are prepared to receive it. Let none of us believe that we are yet all that we are to be, or all that we ought to be, or all that we may be. Brothers and Sisters, we have no conception of what, by the grace of God, a Christian may become. “I can do nothing,” says one. That is true. Learn that lesson well! But there is another lesson, remember, to follow it—“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Do not always rest content with the A B C—go on to the rest of the letters of the alphabet. There is a higher life than some professors live and blessed is he who attains to it. You are a doubter—I am sorry that is the case and I wish I could lead you out of Doubting Castle. But only the Lord can deliver you from that dreadful dungeon! You are a trembler, weak and feeble. Well, God be thanked that you are alive at all, but still, it would be better if you were to grow “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” And you may. You, who now, through lack of faith, wear sackcloth and ashes, may yet, as God’s trustful children, put on the silken garments all bespangled with the jewels of His love! You sit today upon the dunghill, but God does not make dunghills for you—He means you to sit upon a throne, for He has made us kings and priests unto our God. Then why are we sitting on the dunghill? It is well to be even there when God places us there, but it is far better to rise from it and put on our beautiful garments and get to the top of Amana—and there hold sweet communion with Him who dwells on high! God bring us there by His grace! The promise still stands—“The Lord will give grace.” You may have it—therefore desire it! Long for it, seek it, prize it—and you shall yet have it and praise God for it.  
I think that the text further means that the Lord will give grace until it melts into glory. “The Lord will give grace and \_\_\_\_\_.” You know that in some dissolving views, you have one picture on the sheet and then presently the operator begins to slide another over it—and the one melts into the other. That is how it is with the Believer. There is the earthly picture of grace and you can see slowly coming into it—creeping over it, not altogether concealing it, but gradually absorbing it—that blessed picture of glory! Glory is really nothing more than grace fully developed—and when Christians begin to get spiritually ripe—something of the sweetness of Heaven is seen in them even here below. Paul says to the Philippians that “our conversation is in Heaven.” Not only our citizenship, which the word means, but I like our version, our, “conversation” is there, because our “citizenship” is there. The Lord gives His people the grace to live a heavenly life before they get to Heaven! He gives them the grace to taste the clusters of Eshcol before they enter the Promised Land! And He will continue to give grace till grace is consummated in glory. Do not be afraid of the glorious Doctrine of the saints’ Final Preservation, but believe that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ! He who puts His hand to this plow will never look back from it, but will plow a straight furrow right to the last end of the headland. If He has begun to bear our souls up toward Himself and His glory, He will never turn from His purpose, or slacken His hand until He has finished the work in righteousness. He who has commenced this building will never cease to work till the headstone is brought forth with shouts of “grace, grace unto it.”  
“The Lord will give grace and glory.” Think of that, Sinner! Think of your one day being in Glory! If you are, today, in grace, you shall one day be in Glory, as surely as you are now in grace! If you are a poor wretched sinner, only fit to make fuel for the flames of Hell, yet, if you will come and accept the grace of God and trust in the precious blood of Christ, you shall one day strike your harp among the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect! You shall one day be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the Throne of God in Heaven! Does it not make you laugh in your heart to think of it? It often makes me sing as I bless the Lord that I, too, shall be there among the blood-redeemed ones! And you, sorrowful Soul, ought to be merry of heart at the very thought that you shall yet partake with angels and glorified spirits of the bliss which God has prepared for them that love Him!  
II. Now we come to THE LAST GIFT, upon which I shall say but little, yet, had I time, I could say much—“The Lord will give glory.” He will give that glory to those to whom He has given His grace.  
What does this word, “glory,” mean? Ah, Friends, I shall not attempt to tell you all about it—it is too vast a subject for any mortal to handle. Here is sea room for the biggest man-of-war in our great King’s navy! My little boat shall only do a little coasting around the edge of this boundless ocean. “Glory.” What is that?  
Well, first, it is something for the soul of man. This soul of ours, when it is glorified, will be made like to God. That image of God, which Adam had, shall be restored, only yet more brightly through our union with the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul shall be made like unto the Spirit of God in true holiness and righteousness. The glory of the soul will lie much in its absolute perfection. Whatever a soul ought to be, whatever a soul can be—that our soul shall be—it shall be rid of all sin, all tendency to sin, all liability to sin, all possibility of sinning! Oh, this is, indeed, glory, to be perfectly pure!  
I do not doubt, also, that the glorified soul will be greatly enlarged and all its powers much increased—its ability to know, its ability to understand, its ability to enjoy, its ability to love, its ability to serve. We shall not be merely this poor little seed that we now are, but we shall be developed into that glorious flower which God intends to make His people to be in the day of their manifestation! Our glory will also very much consist in happy communion with God, in a very near and dear fellowship with the Most High. We shall converse familiarly with angels and the spirits of the blessed. Far more, we shall converse with Jesus, our elder Brother, our Lover, our Husband! These words drop easily enough from my lips, but what their full meaning must be, who of us can, at present, conceive? An hour with Christ on earth is worth a king’s ransom—have not some of us enjoyed, in ten minutes here below, so much bliss that we have remembered that ten minutes for ten years afterwards? When our blessed Lord has lifted the veil from His face and has also taken the scales off our poor blind eyes and brought us near to Him, we have been ravished with delight! And whether in the body or out of the body, we could not tell. This bliss, and more, we shall be able to endure forever. The sweet delirium of fellowship with Christ below has in it too much of strain for creatures in these mortal bodies often to bear, but, strip us of this house of clay and then we shall be able to drink in deep draughts at the wellhead itself! Draughts, which today would drown us, shall then only content us—and these draughts shall be ours forever and ever. This is glory for the soul!  
But let it never be forgotten that as we are made up of body and soul, so there will be also glory for the body. Though this body may be, for a while, separated from our spirit unless the Lord shall speedily come, yet it is an integral part of our manhood and it, too, is to be glorified. Many of the children of God seem to forget the resurrection of the body. They who are already in Heaven are not yet perfect, as there is only a part of them there at present. The day of their perfection will be when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, incorruptible, and we who are then alive and remain shall be changed! Then our bodies will be no more capable of grief and anguish. Better still, they will never become the messengers and the servants of sin, for even this poor flesh shall be purified from all taint and from all possibility of corruption! The body is sown in weakness—it shall be raised in power! As to what the power of the glorified body shall be, we will not indulge our imagination or attempt to guess, but it will be something extraordinary. There will be no lameness there, no failing sight, no gathering deafness, no infirmity of the flesh— you shall be clean delivered from all these imperfections and your body shall be raised in the image of your immortal Lord!  
There will be no scars of age, no bald heads, no signs and tokens of the work of sin. That sin of your youth, which lies in your bones—you shall be clean delivered from it all, as though you had passed through a refiner’s fire, for the grave shall be but a refining pot to the bodies of the saints—and they shall be raised like unto His glorious body who is their Covenant Head and Lord! When our entire manhood, spirit, soul and body shall be in Heaven, then will this promise be fulfilled, “The Lord will give glory.”  
“Glory” means, first, recognition. When Christ shall declare that He knows us and shall say to each one of us, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” When He shall confess us before men when He comes in the glory of His Father, O Brothers and Sisters, when Christ shall call out His poor persecuted followers and, amidst such a scene as never was beheld before—when angels shall lean from the battlements of Heaven and a cloud of witnesses shall gather round about assembled men, when Christ shall say, “You were with Me in My humiliation, and I acknowledge you as My chosen, My beloved, My brethren—that will be “glory!” There is more glory in one word of recognition from the King of Kings than in all the Orders of the Garter, or of the Golden Fleece that kings are able to distribute among their loyal subjects!

Then the next meaning of the word, “glory,” is vision. “Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” With Job, each Believer can say, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” Yes, we shall behold Christ in all the splendor of His final triumph! We shall see the Father and rejoice in all His infinite perfections! And we shall have fellowship with the Holy Spirit! The one God shall fill all our faculties. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” Perhaps neither eye, nor ear, nor heart will be needed then—but our whole spirit shall drink in the beatific vision of the Glory of God.  
The third meaning of the word, “glory,” is fruition. What the fruition will be, I will tell you when I have been there! Long ago we learned that “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” Brothers and Sisters, we have enjoyed His Word. We have enjoyed His Day. We have enjoyed His Covenant. We have enjoyed His love. But what will it be to enjoy God, Himself, and to enjoy Him forever? The Psalmist spoke of “God, my exceeding joy,” but that was for earth. It will be “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” to enjoy God forever! I had that text explained to me just lately during the week of the Conference. I was so happy, God was so gracious to me and to all the assembled Brothers, in answer to prayer, that I felt, each night when I got home and each morning when I woke, as if I was weighed down with a super-excess of joy! I said to myself, “I can guess, now, what is meant by a weight of glory.”  
It needs a strong man to stand under a weight of Divine Grace here below. It needs a robust constitution to bear the weight of Divine Love even here! It is almost enough to kill a man and one may as well die of excessive joy as of excessive grief—but what will it be when our souls are so enlarged and we are so strengthened that we can enjoy God forever? Five minutes in Heaven and then let me come back—but then, if I did come back, you know, I should have heard unspeakable words which it would not be lawful for a man to utter! As I have not been there, I cannot tell you of all the wondrous things that help to make up the glory of Heaven. And if I had been there, it might be unlawful for me to tell you, so I will not attempt to intrude upon that reserved ground! But what I have to say to you is, Let us all go there and see for ourselves!  
“What is the way?” asks one. Jesus shows Himself before us and says, “I am the way. I am the way.” You ask Him, “But are You sure of it?” “Yes,” says Jesus, “for I am the Truth.” “Oh, but Lord, how shall we traverse that way?” Jesus says, “I am the life.” The first part of our text helps you on to the latter part, for the way of grace is the way to glory. O poor Sinner, that way is open to you! You need Divine Grace and you may have it, for, “the Lord will give grace.” And He will give glory, too, and then what will you and I do? Why, we will give Him glory! When the sun shines on the moon, the moon shines back—and when the glory of God shines on us, then we shall glorify God. Meanwhile, as God is so gracious to us, let us act gratefully towards Him. You know that the word, “grace,” sometimes signifies not only free favor, but also thanks. We often use the expression, “Let us say grace,” when we mean to give thanks to God. So, here on earth, let us think grace, let us live grace, let us sing grace and then, when we get to Heaven, we will live glory, and sing glory, and all the glory shall be ascribed to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!  
Now let us close by singing just this one verse—  
*“Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days!  
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”*  
Sing it to the tune, “Cranbrook.” Sing it as you can sing when you praise the Lord with all your heart and soul!

EXPOSITION C. H. SPURGEON.  
**PSALM 84.**  
To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

It is thought, by some interpreters, that Gittith signifies the winepress. They must have been a very godly people who sang such songs as this in the time of the treading out of the grapes. Oh, that the day were come when the common places of our ordinary industries should be sanctified by Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs! Alas, at the winepress, men too often sing loose and lascivious songs—but these ancient people of God did not.

This Psalm is a song to the chief Musician and it is mainly concerning the house of God and the pilgrimage to it. Every sacred song should be sung at its best. We should call out the chief Musician in every hymn that is dedicated to the service of the Lord.

“To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.” I have often reminded you that these sons of Korah owed their continued existence to an act of special Sovereign Grace. Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all their company were swallowed up alive. They went down to the Pit because of their rebellion. But in the Book of Numbers we read, “Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.” Why they were spared, we cannot tell, but, ever after, they were made to be the singers of the sanctuary. They who are saved by Sovereign Grace are the most fit to praise the name of the Lord! The sons of Korah also became doorkeepers to the house of the Lord and hence, probably, is the allusion to a doorkeeper which we find in this Psalm.

Verse 1. How amiable are Your tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts! “How amiable”—how lovely “are Your tabernacles!” The Temple was not then built. The Lord’s house was as yet only a tent, so that it is not the glory of architecture that makes the house to be lovely—the glory of it is the indwelling God. “How amiable are Your tabernacles!” That is to say, every part of it is lovely. The outer court, the inner court, the Holy of Holies, all the different parts in that ancient sacred shrine were lovely to the Psalmist’s eye. He does not tell us how lovely they were. He leaves off with a note of exclamation, as if he could not measure with his golden rod this city of the great King. “‘How lovely are Your tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts’—lovely because they are Yours! They are our tabernacles if we gather in them, but they are Yours because You are there and, therefore, are they most lovely to our eyes.”

2. My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God. His soul longed until, as it were, it grew pale—for so the Hebrew may be rendered—it grew white with faintness in the intensity of his desire to get up to the courts where God was to be found. God is a King. His ancient tabernacle was one of His royal palaces, so David longed to be a courtier there, that he might dwell in the courts of Jehovah. When he says that his flesh cried out for the living God, he does not mean flesh in the sense in which Paul uses the term, for in that flesh there dwells no good thing, but the Psalmist means to express here the whole of his nature, “My soul, my heart, and my flesh.” The combination of his entire manhood—spirit, soul and body— was moved with such intense agony of desire that it must express itself and it could only express itself in a cry, “My heart and my flesh cries out for the living God.” If it is so with you, my Brothers and Sisters, at this time, you shall have a feast of fat things! He who comes to God’s table with a good appetite shall never go away unsatisfied. It is lack of desire which often hinders us from spiritual delight, but when the desire is set upon God, it shall be satisfied! I fear that we often come to the wells of salvation and yet get nothing because merely coming to the wells is nothing. We read in Isaiah, “With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation.” It is not the wells, but the water out of them which will refresh the weary one! Do not be content with being here, in your pew, in the midst of this great congregation—long after the living God, Himself, for He alone can refresh and revive your soul and spirit! Say, with David, “My heart and my flesh cries out for the living God.”

3. Yes, the sparrow has found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O LORD of Hosts, my King, and my God. These little birds, so insignificant in themselves, were full of holy courage and, with sweet familiarity they came even into the sacred place. They hung upon the eaves of God’s house—they even dared to make their nests there!—

*“O make me like the sparrows blest,  
To dwell but where I love!”*

O my Lord, give me the privilege of the swallow—not only to dwell with You, but to see my young ones, too, all round Your altars, that I may find with You, my God, a nest where I may lay my young! Is not this your desire, my Brother, my Sister, to have God for yourself, and God for your boys, and God for your girls—to be, yourself, God’s servant, and to have all your children His children, too? If so, God grant you the desire of your heart!

How sweetly does David address the Lord—“O Jehovah of Hosts, my King and my God!” The people of God are very fond of mys—they love possessive pronouns—“my King and my God.” God is good, but what is another man’s God to me if He is not mine? I must have Him for my King and my God, or else I shall not really long for Him, or cry out after Him, or delight in Him.

4. Blessed are they that dwell in Your house: they will be still praising You. The nearer to God you are in your life, the sweeter and more constant will be your song to Him. They who dwell with God dwell where there must be singing—

*“Where God does dwell, sure Heaven is there, And singing there must be.  
Since, Lord, Your Presence makes my Heaven, Whom should I sing to but Thee?”*

Blessed are they who always dwell where You dwell, O my God! “They will be still praising You.”

4. Selah. Tighten the harp strings, set the music to a higher key! Lift up the heart! Also let the soul rise to something still sweeter in praise of Jehovah!

5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; in whose heart are the ways—Or, “Your ways.” It is not every man who is in God’s house who is blessed. The blessed man is the one who has brought his heart with him. It is not every man who is in God’s ways who is blessed—but the man whose strength is in those ways, who throws his whole heart and soul into the worship. Half-hearted worship is dreary work. It is like a blind horse going round in a mill. But when the heart is in the service, we feel, then, as if we could dance for joy in the Presence of the Lord our God— “Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are Your ways.”

6, 7. Who passing through the valley of Baca makes it a well; the rain also fills the pools. They go from strength to strength. Everyone of them in Zion appears before God. We do not know, at this date, what that valley of Baca was, for the land has been, to a large extent, destroyed. This ancient song retains the name of the valley of Baca, but it does not explain to us where or what the place was. Perhaps it was a dry and thirsty valley in which, in order to pass through it at all, the pilgrims dug wells that there might be refreshment for their journey. There are many such valleys on the road to Heaven—dark and lonesome, dry and barren—but God’s people learn to dig wells there. Only mark that though we dig the wells, the water to fill them does not rise up from the bottom—it falls down from above. “The rain also fills the pools.” In the Kingdom of Heaven there are some analogies with the kingdom of nature, but there are a great many heavenly things that have no earthly analogy at all. And you cannot with any accuracy argue from natural laws into the spiritual world. For instance, we have “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,” and we throw that anchor up—“which enters into that within the veil.” Whereas earthly mariners drop their anchors down into the sea, we fling ours up into Heaven. That is odd, but it is true. So, we dig a well, but it does not get filled from the bottom—“The rain also fills the pools.” This is a new kind of well and it teaches us that we must use the means, but that everything depends upon God! We have not to depend upon the means, but upon the God of the means—“The rain also fills the pools.”

See, further, Brothers and Sisters, what the way to Heaven is. It is a growing way, an increasing way—“They go from strength to strength.” Those who begin in their own strength go from weakness to weakness, but those who know their own weakness and trust in the Almighty God shall go from strength to strength! In the natural world, as we grow older, we get weaker—but in the moral and spiritual world, when it is as it should be—the older we grow, the stronger we become in God and in the power of His might! What a mercy it is to be on the road to Heaven, which is a road always upwards! From step to step, from hill to hill, from mount to mount, they climb who shall ultimately end their pilgrimage in the King’s palace above. “Everyone of them in Zion appears before God.”

8, 9. O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed. See what a rise there is in the music, here, from, “Hear my prayer,” to, “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.” “When you cannot look on me, look on Your Anointed.”—

*“Him, and then the sinner see,*

*Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.”*  
When God looks at us, He may well be angry. But when He looks upon Christ, He must be glad and full of love.

10. For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. That is, better than a thousand spent anywhere else. You see, we have not yet come to the country where we can stay at God’s public worship all the year together—we have to get it a day at a time. Have you not often wished that there were seven Sundays in the week? I am sure that you have when God has fed your souls and made your spirits merry in the House of Prayer. Then have you sighed for the land—

*“Where congregations never break up,*

*And Sabbaths have no end.”*  
If you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall come there, byand-by, but, at present, you must be satisfied with a day at a time in the courts of the Lord. Yet the Lord can crowd mercies into one day with such a marvelous compression of Divine Grace that we shall seem to get three years’ food in a single day! The Lord make this day to be a sort of millennial day! “A day in Your courts is better than a thousand” spent anywhere else.

10. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. As I said before, the sons of Korah were doorkeepers in the house of the Lord and this Psalm is for them. You know that our poor door-keepers generally have many to find fault with them— somebody or other is sure to feel disobliged. Door-keeping is no very remunerative work, no very easy and pleasing task. “Yet,” says David— King David himself—“I would take off my crown of gold and turn pewopener. I would wish to be even a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, so long as I might but be with my God. And that position would be far better than feasting and rioting in royal pavilions with the wicked.”

11. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Take notice of the whole of that last sentence! Do not go and quote half of it and say, “God has promised that He will withhold no good thing.” It is only promised to, “them that walk uprightly.” And if you walk crookedly, the promise does not belong to you! It is upright walking that brings downright blessing! You shall lack no good thing from God when your whole heart is made good towards God.

12. O LORD of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You. May all of us know this blessedness! Amen.  
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“GRACE AND GLORY”  
NO. 3358

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 6, 1868.

**“The Lord will give Grace and Glory.”  
Psalm 84:11.**

IT is very wise to look within ourselves to discover our own weakness and spiritual poverty, but it is very unwise to be always dwelling upon that weakness and poverty—and to forget that our strength does not lie there, nor are our riches to be found within ourselves! Let us look within to be humbled, but not to be made unbelieving. Look within, so as to be driven from all confidence in ourselves, but never so as to shake our absolute confidence in God. Our text, as it were, beckons us away from seeking the living among the dead, calling us up from searching for precious jewels amid dross and refuse, but directs us to the living God Himself—the overflowing Fountain of every good thing, our Father whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and whose ear is not heavy that He cannot hear us tonight! He—He—Jehovah, Himself, the Infinite, Eternal, Everlasting, Inimitable I AM—He will give Grace and Glory, so that though you may think you have no Grace, He will give it to you, and though you may fear that you shall never obtain Glory, yet He can and will bestow it upon you! He will give Grace and Glory. The very first word of the text, I say, is a taking us away from leaning upon the broken reeds of our own self-reliance and a calling us away to the Rock of our salvation, where we may rest with security!

“He will give Grace and Glory.” That word, “give,” also takes us off from our natural legality of self-trust. I think that we are all very apt to go back to the bondage of Mount Sinai. We are like those foolish Galatians! We are often “bewitched,” so that we do not obey the Truth of God, but, having begun in the Spirit, we seek to be made perfect in the flesh and, being saved already by faith, we often try to be perfected by the works of the Law!

“‘Tis strange, ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis amazing,” that after having felt the whip of legal bondage, we should wish to go back to the brick kilns of Egypt and to be slaves once more! The text says, “He will give Grace and Glory,” which is the very opposite of wages and puts us on the footing of Grace and not on the footing of debt. Oh, it is a blessed thing to see a finger from the sky thus beckoning us away from underneath the quaking mountain, where even Moses confessed that he did altogether fear and quake! It is a blessed thing to be set free from the thunder and lightning, and the Voice as of a trumpet, and to be brought to the blood which speaks better things than that of Abel, and to hear God speaking concerning His great and unspeakable gifts to us!

Now, in the spirit of these two thoughts, let us come to this text, which is very simple, extremely simple, but which is also exceedingly full of comfort if the Lord shall apply it to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

There are just two great and splendid gifts that God here declares He will bestow. First, the gift of Grace, and then next, the gift of Glory. We will take the first gift first in our meditations—

I. GOD WILL GIVE GRACE.  
To whom will He give Grace? Broadly understood, we may say that He will give Grace to His own chosen ones. So is it in the Covenant of Grace. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Grace is a most Sovereign thing. God has the right to give it where He pleases and He takes care that the Sovereignty shall be seen. Some of His chosen ones have gone afar into sin, but He gives them Grace, for all that. Some of them may be on the very verge of destruction and come to the last hour of life—but still, He will give them Grace—and there is not one upon whom His electing love has set the broad arrow of the Kingdom, marking that man to be a vessel of mercy, who shall pass away without receiving Divine Grace! This is a broad statement and though there are some that cavil at it, yet rest assured that it is the Truth of God!

Another statement we may also make as broadly, namely, that He will give Grace to all those who were specially redeemed by Christ. As many as Christ has redeemed and purchased by His blood, shall be His, for we hear Him say, “The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it. The chosen are spoken of in this manner, “These are they who are redeemed from among men,” and although the redemption of Christ has its universal aspect very plainly taught in God’s Word, and I hope we shall never try to take away the force of those universal passages—yet there is a special redemption besides. “He is the Savior of all men,” says the Apostle, “especially of them that believe.” Now, that special redemption is of such a kind that to all those who are concerned in it, He will give Grace. Not one whom Christ has thus redeemed from among men shall perish! Not one of His own blood-bought sheep shall be devoured by the wolf. Not one member of that body of His shall be maimed. Not one part of His bride, the Church, shall be destroyed! To every one of these, it is quite certain, He will give Divine Grace!  
And although some think that these two Truths of God are not practical, yet are they eminently so, for this, among other things, is one practical result—that we preach with holy confidence, with quiet confidence, that our preaching cannot be in vain since we do not cast the net at a chance, but believe that God will fill it and that when the Gospel is preached, it must be the savor of life unto life to many!  
“Other sheep have I,” said Christ, “who are not of this fold: them also must I bring,” and therefore do we preach, because they must be brought!  
As the farmer sows the corn broadcast, with all the freer hand because he knows there is a predestined harvest, even so do we. And as a fisherman who should have a Divine promise that he must catch fish would throw in the net and toil all night cheerfully because he knew he could not labor in vain, so is it with us. We know that if we are steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, this is our comfort— that our labor is not in vain in the Lord! “He shall see His seed! He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands.” I take the expression of the text, then, without qualification—He will give Grace.  
But now, coming to ourselves—for we cannot tell, except by marks and evidences, who are those chosen and who are those specially redeemed—it may be said that the Lord will give Grace to every believing soul. If you will put your whole reliance upon the Atonement of Christ, He will give Grace to you. Though your faith should be so slender that it seems to you to be nothing but a bruised reed, He will not break your faith, but He will give you Grace—and though the spiritual life should seem to be so dim as to be nothing but as smoking flax, He will not quench it, but will give Grace. If you believe, though it is with the faith of despondency, you shall have Divine Grace! If you rest in Christ, though there should be much fear and much mistrust mingled with your reliance, yet He will give Grace. “‘He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” It says nothing as to how much he believes, nor how little—“He that calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” It does not say how loud he is to call, but if his call is never so faint, yet if he does but call, He shall have Grace! “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” It does not say whether he comes walking, or running, or crawling—if he does but come—he shall not be cast out! If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then of you it shall be said, “The Lord will give Grace.”  
The same may be said to every repenting sinner. If you abhor your sin, if you resolve in God’s strength to give it up, if the sweetness has turned to bitterness, if it is like gravel between your teeth, then He will give you Grace, for when you are thoroughly sick of sin and self, then will He give you Grace to joy and rejoice in Christ!  
The same shall be said of all those who are prayerful. He will give Grace to all who seek it with earnest hearts through the Savior. At the Mercy Seat, whether you are a saint or sinner, if you draw near to God in sincere prayer, He has already given you some Grace and He will give you more. Every time that you go to God with true-hearted confidence in prayer, put this before you emblazoned in letters of gold, “He will give Grace.”  
You shall not find that you wait upon God in vain, for He has not said in secret or dark places of the earth, “Seek you My face in vain.” He will, to every prayerful one, give Grace.  
I might continue these instances as to different characters, but rest assured, dear Friend, if you are a Believer, and you use prayer and repentance, you shall find His promise true in all your conditions. If you go forth to work for God, He will give Grace. In the vineyard you shall find Him furnishing you with tools, yes, and giving you strength equal to your day. He will give Grace. And if you are laid aside from active service and made to toss to and fro upon the bed that grows harder every hour till the skin is broken and the bed becomes a misery, still He will give Grace. Perhaps you are untried at suffering, but He will give you Grace. Perhaps you are naturally of an impatient spirit—wait upon Him—He knows how to bring your spirit down one way and lift it up another! He will give Grace.  
Thus might I continue to take the text from its absolute sense and apply it to all the characters that are pictured in God’s Word as having a part and lot in the blessedness of salvation—and we may say of each of these, “He will give Grace.”  
But to turn the subject a moment, let us ask, What Grace will God give?  
He will give all manner of Grace. There is Grace not only in fullness, but in all variety treasured up in Christ Jesus. As our needs are many, so the forms in which Grace blesses us are many, and He will give Grace in all these forms! Do you mourn tonight your ignorance of the deep things of God? Do you feel yourself to be like a little child studying His A. B. C. book in God’s great school? Then if you want to understand with all saints what are the heights and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, He will give you Grace! He will give Grace to instruct. He will make you to know even as you are known. He shall give you His Holy Spirit who shall lead you into all the Truths of God and take of the things of Christ and show them to you. He will give instructing Grace!  
Perhaps tonight you are in some great dilemma. There is one difficulty on the right aide and another on the left. There are mountains behind and the rolling sea in front, and you say, “What shall I do?” “Stand still and see the salvation of God,” for He will give you delivering Grace. If He does not give you money to fill your purse, He will give you Grace to help you to bear your poverty. If He does not give you health to bring you off your sickbed, He will give you Grace to make your bed in all your suffering, so that you shall bear it and yet rejoice in the Lord always! He will give Grace. If you will only wait, you shall have directing Grace. You shall hear a voice near you, saying, “This is the way; walk you in it.” If you will do as David did when he said, “Bring here the ephod”—that was in order that he might ask of God’s priests what he should do—if you will wait until Christ, God’s great High Priest, takes the sacred Urim and Thummim, He shall be pleased to send the Light of God into your soul and you shall have directing Grace to guide you on your way! “He that trusts in his own heart is a fool, but He that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.”  
But you need, dear Friends, perhaps at this moment, not so much instruction and direction as comfort. It may be you are feeling greatly depressed. Your spirits have sunk very low, indeed. Well, He will give you Grace. The doctor can give medicine, but God can give Grace! A dram of Grace is often better than a pound of what the world can give in the form of cordials. Oh, what blessed revivals of spirit God can give to His downcast ones!  
I think it is one of the delights of the Spirit of God to comfort mourners. I know it is, for He might, if He had pleased, have taken the name of The Instructor, and Jesus might have spoken of Him as The Quickener, but yet it is so blessed to recollect that He did not do so, but that the name of The Comforter was especially His because we need most His comfort to strengthen and fortify us for all life’s endurances. We need most the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and that is His main business, His gracious occupation—that in which He most delights to act—to comfort all that are tried and mourn!  
When a man has many titles, he will naturally choose to be best known by the one which he likes best. And the Holy Spirit uses this name of The Comforter, though He has many more names besides. Oh, you, then, who are troubled and distracted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, Jesus comes, and He says, “He will give you Grace,” and if He does this, you need not wish to have your trouble removed, but, like Paul, be quite satisfied with the gracious promise, “My Grace is sufficient for you.”  
Possibly, however, dear Friend, you are not troubled tonight. Beware of that! Be thankful and pray that you may not be. “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” But it is possible that you now need Grace to lead you to make advances in inward sanctification—and though this may seem very difficult to you in the position in which you are placed, and burdened as you are with your inward corruptions, yet He will give Grace! You have a bad temper? Down with it! “I cannot,” you say. But He will give Grace. You have a proud spirit. Away with it! “I cannot conquer it,” you say. He will give Grace. You have grown cold of late and lukewarm—you must be revived—you must recover from this backsliding. You say, “How?” He will give Grace! Grace is the one thing that is needed to put the Christian into a healthy state of soul! And the promise of the Lord which we are using tonight—and repeating so often in your ears—is just to the point—He will give Divine Grace. You must never say you cannot be as holy as So-and-So. Never tell me you cannot grow to be as patient as Job, or as believing as Abraham. Job received his patience and Abraham received his believing from God! He is not straitened in His gifts to us. He is as ready to enrich us as He was to enrich those ancient ones. Go to Him with child-like confidence, with this in your mouth, “He will give Grace.”

Now, it is not possible for me to state the case of everyone of my Brothers and Sisters now present. You may be lacking in strength or protection, or you may be needing correction and rebuke—but whatever your great need, His Grace will meet it and so the promise is suitable to every one of us, “He will give Grace.” Come, you poor Hannah, you whose lips move in silent prayer because of some very painful domestic affliction. Tell the Lord what it is! There may be no change in your circumstances, but oh, if He gives you Grace, it will seem very different from what it was!  
Man of business, you have come here tonight having passed through a world of trouble during the day. You cannot get it out of your mind and somehow you cannot see how the Lord can alter it. Well, He may not, but He will give you Divine Grace and then the difference will be marvelous!  
Thus might I select the trouble of each one, but I am sure that whatever the wound is, this plaster will just fit it. The world’s comfort is described by one of the Prophets thus, “The bed is shorter than that a man may stretch himself upon it, and the covering is too narrow for him to wrap himself in it.” Ah, it is not so with my text! Now, stretch yourselves, you that have big troubles. “He will give Grace,” is a bed quite long enough for you! Now, then, you that are most naked and deprived of warmth—rap this around you—surely this will set your soul a glow—“He will give Grace.”  
“All necessary Grace will God bestow.”  
Perhaps you are shivering tonight at the thought of the greatest enemy of all, namely, death! And as you are getting old, perhaps you fear his approach. Well, but Friend, He will give Grace and though you must die, yet Grace will enable you to go through the Jordan singing in its utmost depths, triumphing in the Grace which will surely bring you safe to the other side! He will give Grace—Grace of all sorts to those who earnestly seek it.  
But now, again—still shifting the kaleidoscope a little—taking the same thought only putting it in other lights. In what manner will God give Grace?  
Well, dear Friends, He will give it sufficiently. He will give you as much Grace as you need, though certainly none to spare. Each man shall have his omer full of manna every day. There shall be no lack in the Lord’s camp! There shall be abundant Grace for abundant temptation or trial. And for those who are in many trials, there shall be Grace yet superabundant!  
The Lord will give His Grace seasonably. It shall always come just when we need it—

*“He is never before His time,*

*He is never behind.”*  
Whenever your testing or trouble shall come, your Grace shall come, too, and when you arrive at the spot where you will have to put your back down to the burden, there shall the Grace be given that will strengthen your back to bear the load! You shall not meet with abounding Grace when you do not require it, but just as your days, so shall your strength be.

God will also send this Grace of His readily. You shall not have to tug and strain to get it. You shall not have to labor and toil to win it. It shall drop upon you like honey falling from the comb! It shall come as freely to you as the water bubbles up from the great spring. He will be a very present help in time of trouble and be glad to deliver you—as glad to deliver you as you are to be delivered!

And the Grace shall come to you constantly—not fitfully and only sometimes, but at all times! By night and by day. God shall never cease to bless you, for His mercy endures forever—

*“At home or abroad, on the land and the sea,*

*As your days shall demand, shall your strength always be.”*If the earth should forget the Covenant which God made for it with the sun and moon. If seedtime and harvest, and summer and winter should pass away, as they must in the general conflagration, yet still the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but the Covenant of His Grace shall not depart from you! Grace shall come to you constantly.

But remember one thing. It will come to you mediately, that is to say, not direct from God immediately, but mediately through Christ. You shall get your Grace from Him in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. And, in another sense, you shall get it mediately through the use of means. “For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” He will give Grace, but you must pray for it! He will give Grace, but you must search the Scriptures to find it! He will give Grace, but you must observe Gospel ordinances—you must not be negligent of Baptism or the Lord’s Supper! He will give Grace, but you must listen to the Word, and hear, and your souls shall live! He will give Grace, but you must get into communion with God and draw near to Him—have your times of quiet retirement, of still meditation, for although the Lord makes the conduit head to flow unto the marketplace, yet He expects His people to bring their pitchers there to get them filled! Though He spreads the table, yet He does not force the food into our mouths! We must come to the table and eat of the dainties which He has prepared. He is very liberal and gracious. Oh, be not straitened in yourselves, for you need never be straitened in Him! So we come back to the text. He will give Grace, but we must take care that we go to Him for it in His own appointed way.

But now to close upon this first promised blessing, Who is it will give Grace? This brings us back in a circle to the spot from which we started. “He will give Grace.” Oh, I want so to make each Believer cling to his God! He will give Grace. You will not get Grace from out of yourselves! It will never spring up within us apart from God. He will give Grace. You will not get Grace merely by using the means of Grace, as some do mechanically and who feel quite satisfied when they have had their morning prayer, or have been to the public service, if there is one, and have read their Bible Chapter, and so on, their hearts being really asleep all the time. No! You must go to God, for it is He who gives Grace and no one else can! And what a blessing it is that you do not need anyone to help you to come to Him! You can approach Him yourselves, through Jesus Christ! And He has promised, not by a priest, nor by any means of that kind, but by Himself, to give you Grace, so that you, tonight, who have not any Grace, if you come to God, you will get it! You will not get it by working and praying, and I do not know what, all in themselves, but if your mind can get right to the invisible God and ask Him for Grace, He will give it! Depend upon it, no man ever did sincerely seek the Grace of God but that, sooner or later, he had it. A man may be a long time seeking and he may anxiously look and not discover what he needs, but though the promise tarry, wait for it—it will come! God is faithful to His promise and He will in due time answer your prayers, for there it is on record, “He will give Grace.” Do not blot the promise out of your heart, poor Soul, but cling and hang on to it! As a drowning man clings and hangs on to a plank, so do you to this Divine assertion, “He will give Grace.”

May the Lord apply those remarks, and now let us say a few words upon the second great promise—  
II. HE WILL GIVE GLORY.  
He will “give Grace and Glory.” That word, “and,” seems very little as we hear it. It is nothing but a very common conjunction which is used so plentifully that it seems to carry no meaning in it at all! But in this case we would not take ten thousand pounds for these three letters which make this little word, “and.” “The Lord will give Grace and Glory.” Why, He has riveted the two things together—Grace and Glory! There are many who would like to take that diamond rivet out, but they cannot. The Lord does not say that He will give Grace and perdition. He does not say, on the other hand, that He will give Glory without first giving Grace. He has put the two together—and what God has joined together let no man put asunder!  
If we have Grace, we shall as surely have Glory, for the two are tied up in one bundle. These are twin stars that shine together and if you have shared His Grace, then His Glory cannot be denied. Grace shall flower into Glory as the bulb in the blossom! Grace shall rise as the fountain and Glory shall be its spreading river!  
If we possess the Grace, we shall not perish, but if we have it not, we must perish and never know the Glory! It is not possible that those shall be glorified who have not first of all been justified, and then sanctified— and where Grace does not reign in our hearts we shall not reign in Heaven!  
“He will give Grace and Glory.” Now, the Glory that He shall give—oh, that we had the power to see it and to understand it! Eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love Him! But He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, “that we may search all things, even the deep things of God.” We do, therefore, know a little of what that Glory is. The eye does not, the ear does not, but the enlightened soul taught of the Spirit of God does know what the Glory will be. So far as this we know, that the Glory which we who have obtained Grace are to receive is the Glory of Heaven—whatever Heaven may be, a place or a state, or both, as is most probable! Whatever may be meant by the streets of shining gold, the gates of pearl, the walls of jasper, calcedony, and sapphire. Whatever may be indicated by crowns, and palms, and harps of gold—whatever may be meant by the river of the Water of Life and trees that bear twelve manners of fruits—all this in perfection is the inheritance of those who have Grace in their hearts! Oh, you shall have the harps, you shall wave the palms, you shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God! If there are degrees in Glory, as some say, yet this thing is very certain, that the very least of the saints will have Glory—and I do not see how the very greatest could have more.

The very meanest, the very doorkeepers, if such there should be in the House of the Lord above, will have Glory! And I am sure we can say of Heaven that if we may but have the lowest place there, we will bless the Lord to all eternity! The Glory that God can give is the Glory of Heaven!  
In the next place, it is the Glory of eternity. Eternity! Oh, when we begin to speak of that word we know not how to speak! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! It must expound itself. We are always confusing it with time, and speak of the “countless ages of eternity” as though there were any “ages,” or could be anything like counting in eternity at all, which is of unending duration! Now, the Glory which Christ is to give us will be such a Glory as that. It will never know a pause, never draw near to a conclusion, never decline and we shall never grow weary of it—nor will it be weary of us. It is the Glory of eternity!  
Further, Brothers and Sisters, we are told by the Lord that the Glory which He will give to His people is the Glory of Christ. “The Glory which you gave Me I have given them.” Can you conceive how glorious Christ is, not only in His Nature originally, but now that He has obtained as a reward, a seat upon His Father’s Throne and at His Father’s right hand? Brothers and Sisters, whatever Glory Jesus may have, He will share it with us, when we shall be like He and when we shall see Him as He is. It is the Glory of Christ!  
And hence, to crown all, it is the Glory of the Father Himself, for Christ partakes in His Father’s Glory, and even so shall we! Does not your heart long and pant to know by actual enjoyment what this Glory is? Oh, to get away from looking in the mirror and to have a view of Christ’s face! To have the clouds and mists all swept away, and in the serene atmosphere of Heaven to behold the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off!  
Why, this Glory is the Glory of perfect nature—spotless, sinless, incorruptible—a body that can know no weakness, or sickness, or decay! A soul that will not be capable of temptation, that cannot be fretted by care, nor distracted by trouble!  
It is the Glory of victory. The Glory which God will give His people is the Glory of bruising Satan under his feet shortly, the Glory of seeing the arrows and the bow, the sword and the shield of the devil forever broken in pieces! The Glory of seeing all the hosts of Hell confounded and put to the blush eternally by everyone of the saints in whom Christ shall reign forever!  
It is the Glory of perfect rest, perfect happiness and perfect security. It is the Glory of the foot upon the Rock, with the new song in the mouth and the goings established! It is the Glory of the blessed. He who knows what it is when the whole soul shall be as full of happiness as it can hold, shall float, swim, dive and plunge into seas of heavenly rest! It is when it shall not be possible for a man to have a wish ungratified, nor a desire unfulfilled! It is where every power shall find ample employment without weariness, and every passion shall have full indulgence without so much as a fear of sin—  
*“Oh, happy hour, oh, blest abode,  
I shall be near and like my God!  
And every power find sweet employ  
In that eternal world of joy!”*  
Do you not again say, “Why are His chariots so long in coming?” Why do You delay, Beloved? Be You as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Beza!  
And now, to close. The text says, “He will give Glory.” So, then, although Glory is a reward and is often called so, yet still it is a gift! The rewards of Grace are of Grace. They are not legal rewards given to us because we deserve them. As one says, Christ first gives His servants Grace to serve Him, and then rewards them as if they had served Him in their own strength, though their service, indeed, is His work in them rather than their work for Him! It is a gift then. There is not a soul in Heaven that is there by merit. There is not a note of self-righteousness to mar the song of Free Grace before the Throne of God! It is all love, undeserved love, love without limit, love to be extolled throughout eternity!  
But it says that He will give Glory. Now, when will He give it? Ah, would not some of us like to know! If we could get a hold of some Prophetical work that would tell us when we were, all of us, going to get this Glory, I am sure we should pay the price with great readiness and cheerfulness. But we would be very unwise in so doing—and he is the wisest man who says—  
*“My God I would not wish to see  
My fate with curious eyes.”*  
It is enough for you, Christian, that you will have Glory! And I will tell you one thing—you will have it before seventy year’s time. There is very little probability with any one of you who have grown up to manhood or womanhood, that there will be a single exception to that statement! Well, that is not long, and that is the outside! Some of you will have it very soon. Ah, we should not wonder if it came to you before this year of Grace has gone that you will have reached the land of Glory! Others may be spared a little longer, but what is the difference in the time? It really seems to be no measurement at all. Life is only a span at the longest, and but a span even at the shortest—that it is much the same as compared with eternity. When we do but get to Heaven, we shall wonder that we thought anything about time at all. An hour with our God will make up for all its troubles. Yes, I suppose that but one sight of Christ will take away all the taste of the bitters of life from our mouths forever! We shall wonder how we ever could have fretted and worried ourselves with such little things as they were—such insignificant trifles and how these light afflictions which were but for a moment and are not worthy to be compared to the eternal weight of Glory—could have exercised such a depressing influence upon our spirits at times! If we could blush in Heaven, surely we would blush to think that we have been so impatient with tarrying a little while here!  
When shall we come to this Glory? Well, we shall come to it when our work is done. We shall not be kept out of the wage a moment after it is earned. We shall come to Glory when we are ripe for it. When the fruit is mellow, the farmer will gather it in. Some grow mellow soon, but some are naturally sour and they need to be long in the mellowing. We shall get to Heaven when we have really been tried in the furnace till there is no more need for the trying—when we have passed through the last crucible and have come out of it wholly sanctified—the process being complete.  
This much we know, that we shall go to Heaven just when God has purposed it. The devil himself, with all the hosts of Hell, cannot keep us back a moment longer than that! We shall go there just when Heaven will be most Heaven to us. We shall go there just when we should have chosen to go ourselves, if we had had the wisdom of God to choose for us. We shall go there just when Christ will be ready to welcome us and when we shall know that He has prepared a place for us. Let us be patient awhile then. Only let us hang hard upon this gracious promise, putting the Lord frequently in mind of it, “He will give Grace and Glory.”  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, one more remark. If the Lord does give Grace and Glory to some of your friends, do not quarrel with Him about it. He said He would, and when He does, why should we complain? Did you ever see two persons praying against each other? Can you suppose such a thing as a Believer praying for one thing and Christ praying for another? Now, listen to them. There is a Believer praying over a friend, “Oh, God, spare him! Spare him, I pray You, I beseech You I entreat You! Spare him and let him yet live here.” Listen! There is Christ praying, too, and He says, “Father, I will that they, also, which You have given Me, should be with Me where I am.” The Believer wants his friends to be with him where he is! But Christ says, “Where I am.” Now, when Christ’s prayers and our prayers cross each other in this way, I put it to you, which shall win? When we pull one way and Christ pulls the other, what shall our choice be? Surely we shall say, “Oh, Lord Jesus, I would not compete with You for a moment! No, You have a dearer claim upon my friend than I have, for You have bought him with Your precious blood.”  
It is hard to part, but let them go! If He has given your dear children, or your friends, or your partners in life, Grace now, when He proceeds to give them Glory you may weep, for, “Jesus wept,” but you must not murmur, for that would be to deny Christ’s claim to what He has purchased with His own precious blood!  
Oh, that all of you had Grace that you might all have Glory! Do not hope for Glory without Grace, but Jesus is willing to give it. Whoever trusts Him shall receive it. May it be the portion of us all, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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A FEAST FOR THE UPRIGHT  
NO. 1659

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 14, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give Grace and Glory: no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You!” Psalm 84:11, 12.**

IN this sweet Sabbatic Psalm the writer rejoices in the House of God. He evidently loves the place of godly assembly, the place where prayer and praise were offered by the united tribes of his people. But, Brothers and Sisters, there was no superstition in this love. He loved the House of God because he loved the God of the house! His heart and flesh cried out, not for the altar and the candlestick, but for his God. True, his soul fainted for the courts of the Lord, but the reason was that he cried out for the living God, saying, “When shall I come and appear before God?” Brethren, it is well to take an interest in the place where you gather for worship. I am always glad when Brothers and Sisters are moved to contribute towards the necessary maintenance of the building and the provision for its cleanliness and propriety. I hate that God should be served in a slovenly way. Even the place where we meet to worship should show some sign of reverence for His name.

But still, our respect for our place of assembly must never degenerate into a superstitious reverence for the mere structure—as though there were some peculiar sanctity about the spot—and prayer offered here would be more acceptable than elsewhere. The great objective of our desire must be to meet with God, Himself. In hearing, the point is to hear the voice of God! In singing, the charm is truly to praise the Most High! In prayer, the main objective is to plead with God and so to speak that our cry comes up before Him, even into His ears. Let us always remember this and never rest content with merely going to a set place. Let us reckon that we have failed if we have not met with God! Let us come up here with strong desire for communion with the Lord in spirit and in truth.

The Psalmist also knew right well that the spiritual Law runs through everything. He perceived that character is an essential, not only to acceptable worship, but to all real blessedness. In our text he speaks not of those who visit the Temple, but of those who walk uprightly and trust in God. There is no necessary blessedness in visiting tabernacles and temples. In all assemblies for worship the question is, Who are they that gather? Are their hearts in God’s ways? Are their souls thirsting after God? The promises are very rich, but to whom are the promises made? What if they are not made to us? Then, the richer they are, the more sorrowful will be our loss of them!

Before I unfold the inexhaustible treasures of this marvelous portion of Scripture, I want to dwell upon this fact, that these things are for a special people. The blessing is to the man that walks uprightly—the truehearted man whose course is sincere, righteous, honest and just. He stands firmly and he walks erect. He does not bend and lean towards the right or to the left. He has no sinister motives or crooked policies. He is straight as a line, and is not to be swayed by any side winds. It is a very suggestive figure—an upright man is not twisted or doubled up or wrongly inclined—or tortuous in his ways and thoughts. He stands on the square and is distinctly perpendicular. This is the man who will enjoy the blessing from the God of Israel!

Sin is a twist and it is a twist that robs us of the blessing in our text. But, since no man is upright by nature, we are reminded of the way by which we come to be upright— “O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You.” We must have faith as the groundwork of all. Then “faith works by love” and purifies the soul. And by this purification the man is made to walk uprightly. Oh, to be resting where God bids us rest, namely, in the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus! Oh, to be depending where all must depend—upon the faithfulness of the Covenant-making and the Covenant-keeping God! Such a man has a solid rock beneath his feet. He trusts in God and so he stands firmly and is able to walk uprightly because he has a firm foothold.

Judge you, then, yourselves. Are you trusting in the Lord? Are you walking uprightly? If so, here is “a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined.” I would say to every child of God who can claim the character I have been describing, come to the text and freely enjoy it! What? Does no star of hope shine in your midnight sky? Do clouds surround you and thicken into an impenetrable gloom? Come to the text, for “the Lord God is a sun.” Here is an end to all your darkness! When He appears, the night vanishes and your light has come! Are you in great danger? Do perils surround you—temptations from the world, assaults of Satan—the rising up of your own corruption? Do you feel as if you moved in the center of a fierce fight? Is it as much as you can do, even, to hope that you will escape the fiery dart?

Come to the text, then, and behold how He that keeps Israel has provided for your safety! Read the blessed words, “The Lord God is a shield.” He is a broad shield that shall cover you from head to foot and quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One. Here is perfect safety for all who take Jehovah to be their Helper. “The Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil: He shall preserve your soul.” But perhaps you tell me that you feel empty of all good and dry of all joy. Spiritual life is at a very low ebb with you. You can scarcely believe, much less reach to full assurance. You scarcely feel enough life to exhibit the tenderness you sigh for and you cannot reach to the faith you desire. I hear your groans, but come along with you! Here is the exact word for you. “The Lord will give Grace.” His rich free favor waits to bless the undeserving and it is so strong and influential that those who have nothing in themselves may at once receive every precious thing! The God of All Grace will give Grace!

“Yes,” you say, “I have Grace, but I find that the gracious life is a very struggling one. I am contending from day to day with my inward corruptions and, besides, the infirmities of old age have been creeping upon me for years and I feel them so bitterly that I wish for the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.” Friend, you need not fly far! The text promises you the best possible rest. The Lord who says that He will give Grace now tells you that He will give Glory! Wait a little longer. The sun which shines more and more will come to perfect day. “It is better on before.” Glory will soon be in your actual possession—much sooner than you think! Between you and Heaven there may be but a step! Perhaps before another sun has risen on the earth you may behold the face “of the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off.” At any rate, here is comfort for you—the same Lord who will give Grace will also give Glory.

Do I hear another Brother sighing because he is in the depths of poverty? And is that poverty not only of bread and of water, but a poverty of soul? Do you feel straitened in spirit and so weak that you can hardly call a promise your own? Yet, dear Brother, if you are trusting in the Lord and He has helped you to walk uprightly, do not hesitate, but come to the text and dip your bucket into this deep and overflowing well—and fill it up to the brim—for what does the text say? “No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.” Here is everything for nothing! Everything for you! Everything to be had at once according as you shall require it. It is God’s Word, not mine! God’s own sure Word which gives you all this blessing. Come, then, quit the dust and the darkness. Mount into brightness and rejoice in the Lord, your God, who bids you shout for joy!

Have you fears about the future? I need not stay to tell you how sweetly the text will lull them all to sleep. Yet suffer me these few sentences. Do you fear the darkness of future trial? The Lord God is your Sun! Do you fear dangers which lie before you in some new sphere upon which you are just entering? The Lord will be your Shield! Are there difficulties in your way? Will you need great wisdom and strength? God’s Grace will be sufficient for you and His strength will be glorified in your weakness! Do you fear failure? Do you dread final apostasy? It shall not be! He who gives you Grace will, without fail, give you Glory!

Between here and Heaven there is provender for all the flock of God so that they need not fear famishing on the road. He that leads them shall guide them into pastures that never wither and to fountains that are never dried up, for, “no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.” Is not this a glorious text? It overpowers me! It is a gem of priceless value! I feel as if I could not place it in a proper setting, but must hold it up just as it is and turn it this way and that, and bid you mark how each facet flashes forth the light of Heaven! It is a true Kohinoor among the gems of promise! It is so many sided, so transparent, so brilliant it belongs to the King of kings and He bids us wear it this day!

What shall I hope to say which will be worthy of this supreme Scripture? How can my words fitly set forth this Word of the Lord? It would not be an ill way of considering my text if I were to preach from it in this fashion. First let us observe what God is—“The Lord God is a sun and a shield.” By nature He is both these to His people and as such He is ours, for is not this a leading article in the Covenant of Grace, “I will be their God”? “The Lord is my portion, says my soul.” The Lord has given Himself to me as He is, even as Jehovah, the I AM! Is God omnipotent? He is almighty for His people. Is He omniscient? His wisdom cares for them. Is God omnipresent? Is God immutable? Is God eternal? Is God infinite? He is ours in all those respects!

The Lord God is a sun and shield and, as Sun and Shield He belongs to those who are trusting in Him and walking uprightly. If we preached thus, our second head would be what God will give. The Lord will give Grace and Glory! He has given them, is giving them and will give them, for the tense may be taken as you choose. He always will give free favor and kindly aid. He has given you Grace up to now and done great things for you. And He will show you greater things than these—

*“His Grace will to the end  
Stronger and brighter shine.  
Nor present things, nor things to come,  
Shall quench the spark Divine.”*

He will supply you with Grace and Glory us the generous grants of His love. They are not a wage, but a gift. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” Glory will come to you on free-Grace terms.

And then there is, thirdly, what the Lord will withhold. And what is that? Why, nothing at all that is good, for “no good thing will He withhold.” We have among us some men who are great at withholding. If they give, it costs them an effort. But if they withhold, their purse strings are in their natural condition. Our God never was a withholding God. He makes His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good. Ever since that first day when “He spoke and it was done,” He has gone on manifesting Himself to this world, pouring out Himself in goodness, spreading His own care and love over all so that He is to be found filling all space and sustaining all existence! God’s blessedness delights in scattering blessings. To withhold would not enrich Him as to give does not impoverish Him. Especially to His saints does He abound. To them He gives all things. “No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.”

I am not going to preach from the text in that way. We shall survey it in another fashion. Here flows a living stream—bring your buckets with you! Take care that you do not come to this River of Life merely to gaze on its surface—the river of God is full of water and it is all intended for our use! Oh, for a hearty draft at this good hour! Here is enough and to spare! Make free with it, O you who trust in the Lord!

I. First, then, out of five particulars, here are, for God’s people, BLESSINGS IN THEIR FULLNESS, for, “the Lord God is a sun.” The blaze of my text almost blinds me! It does not say, “God is light,” though that is true, for He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. But the words are, “the Lord God is a sun.” Then, if God is mine, I have not only light, but I have the Source of light. I have for my possession the central Sun from whom all light comes to this world! We have heard of one who received apples from a friend and was grateful. Another was more highly favored, for his friend planted his garden with fruit trees. You and I have fruit from God and therein we are favored. Yes, but we have the Lord, Himself, and thus we have the Tree of Life and a perpetual supply most fresh, sweet and constant!

It is well to get a drink from a pitcher, but it is better to be like Isaac, who dwelt by the well, because then, if the pitcher becomes empty, there is an abiding supply from which to fill it. God is the Source of all conceivable good, yes, inconceivable blessing lie in Him and, as such, He belongs to His people! There might be light apart from the sun, but there could be no blessing apart from God! And, on the other hand, every sort of blessing is in God and nothing is lacking in Him. He who is all Good and the Source of all good, has made Himself our Divine possession. God is a sun—that is an infinity of blessing!

No man among us can conceive the measure of the light and heat of the sun. I suppose that calculations have been made by which the heat of the sun has been thought to be estimated, but the calculations must be beyond all ordinary numeration. Concerning the sun—its light, heat and influence are beyond conception! Its light and heat have been continually streaming forth throughout many ages and yet they are unabated to this hour—all that has come forth of it is far less than that which still remains! For all practical purposes the light and heat of the sun are infinite and certainly in God all blessedness is absolutely infinite. There is no measuring it. We are lost. We can only say— “Oh, the depths of the love and goodness of God!” In being heirs of God we possess all in all. There is no bound to our blessedness in God.

Further, if God is called a sun, it is to let us know that we have obtained an immutability of blessedness, for He is “the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” God is not love, today, and hate, tomorrow— He says, “I am God, I change not.” There are said to be spots in the sun which diminish the light and heat which we receive, but there are no such spots in God! He shines on with the boundless fullness of His infinite love toward His people in Christ Jesus! “This God is our God forever and ever.” If we were to live as long as Methuselah we should find His love and power and wisdom to be the same—and we might confidently count upon being blessed thereby.

What treasures of mercy do you and I possess in being able to say, “O God, You are my God!” We have the source of mercy, the infinity of mercy and the immutability of mercy to be our own. There much must be added concerning God as a sun—that He is forever communicating His light and heat and excellence to all who are about Him. I cannot conceive the sun shut up within itself. An un-shining sun is a sun un-sunned! And a God that is not good and pouring forth His goodness has laid aside His Deity! It is contrary to the very notion and idea of an infinitely good God for Him to restrain His goodness and keep it back from His people!

Therefore, Beloved, you have not only God supremely good, but God abundantly giving Himself out to His people! He is not a spring shut up and a fountain sealed, but a springhead always flowing in winter and in summer. Nothing in God is reserved from His believing people. He gives Himself to you in all His fullness. All your needs shall be abundantly satisfied out of the riches of His goodness. Has ever man such a task as I have in trying to speak of what is altogether unspeakable? Who shall fully extol the sun? Stand out in the open and look the sun full in the face for a little while—and when blindness threatens you, learn how little we can know of the greater Sun, the Sun of Righteousness! And if thought fails, what shall speech do? How can it be possible for men to speak aright on such a text as this— “The Lord God is a sun”?

Go, you cold words, and be exhaled in the presence of this central fire! Yet I can show you enough to let you see that there is more than I can show you! I can say enough to let you know that there is a great deal more than I can say or than you can hear! To speak on this theme calls for some of those words which they speak in Heaven in the full blaze of the Glory—words such as mortal tongues cannot compass! Fully to set forth the wondrous height and depth of this promise might need that same Spirit who of old dictated it to the Psalmist and placed it in the sacred page. “The Lord God is a sun”—here is blessedness in its fullness!

II. Now, secondly—and this is a deeply interesting point—this glorious Word of God gives us BLESSINGS IN THEIR COUNTERBALANCE. Let me explain myself. One blessing alone might scarcely be a blessing, for in being too great a blessing it might crush us. We may have too much of a good thing. We need some other gift to balance the single benediction. So notice here, “The Lord God is a sun and shield.” “Sun and shield” hang before my eyes like two golden scales! Each one adds value to the other! When God is a sun to His people, it may be He warms them into temporal prosperity with His bright beams so that their goods increase, their body is in health, their trade succeeds and their children are spared. They are grateful to God and joyful because of the blessings which He has bestowed upon them.

He gives them their heart’s desire. He permits them to enjoy the blessing of this life as well as the promise of the life that is to come. Yet danger lurks here! You have heard of sunstroke and prosperous persons are very apt to feel it. Our poor heads cannot bear the full beams of the sun of prosperity—we are smitten down with pride, or carelessness, or worldliness, or some other evil. It is trying for the soul to bask in the unclouded sun. Temporal gains are blessings in themselves, but such is our poor nature that we do not make blessings of them, but we often make idols of them and then they become curses!

What a sweet mercy it is that when God prospers His children, and is a sun to them, He comes in at the same time and acts as their shield! The same God who is the pillar of fire to the hosts of Israel is also their pillar of cloud! Our hymn well puts it—

*“He has been my joy in woe,  
Cheered my heart when it was low,  
And with warnings softly sad,  
Calmed my heart when it was glad.”*

When everything is bright with us, the Lord knows how to sober His children’s spirits so that they use, but do not abuse, the things of this life. Even when they most abound with worldly joys, He makes His people feel that these are not their heart’s joy. He shades us from the noxious effect of wealth and content. He makes rich and adds no sorrow therewith. He suffers not the sun to smite us by day. Is not this a gracious style of counterbalance?

“The Lord God is a sun and shield,” too, when He shines upon us spiritually. Oh, how I rejoice in the sunny side of spiritual life! I do not always get it, but when I do reach it, how happy I am! My heart is ready, like the gnats in the sunbeams, to dance up and down with intense delight! When God shines upon our soul, what gladness! What ecstasy! Then, truly, we would hardly change places with the angels—and as for kings and princes—we pity them! My God, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon me and I ask no more! It is Heaven below!

I know some of my Brothers and Sisters are often moping in the dungeon, but I guarantee you that when they do get out, they can dance with the nimblest and they call for the merriest tunes, too, for theirs is no second-rate delight! It is a great mercy that when God gives His people great spiritual joys He usually gives them a humbling sense of themselves at the same time. The shadow of their former depressions prevents their being unduly excited with their present joy, or else the forecast of another chastisement is given them and this sobers them when they are inclined to be lifted up. The Lord has ways and means of letting His people be as happy as they can be—but yet not happier than they ought to be! He gives them Grace so that they can be full of assurance and yet full of holy fear— always rejoicing and yet never presuming—lifted up and yet lying low before the Lord.

He gives them a well-mixed experience and so forms an all-round character. While He is, to them, a sun producing rapid growth, He is also a shield forbidding their being burned up. He is their great Benefactor, but also their wise Chastener—and in both, alike, He blesses them! Look at the text another way. When the sun shines upon a man, he is made the more conspicuous by it. Suppose a hostile army to be down in the plain and a soldier in our ranks is sent upon some errand by his captain. He must pass along the hillside. The sun shines upon him as he tries to make his way among the rocks and trees.

Had it been night, he could have moved safely, but now we fear that the enemy will surely pick him off, for the sunshine has made him conspicuous. He will have need to be shielded from the many cruel eyes. Christian men are made conspicuous by the very fact of their possessing God’s Grace. You are the light of the world and a light must be seen! A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. If God gives you light, He means that light to be seen—and the more light He gives you, the more conspicuous you will be. He is your sun and He shines upon you—you reflect His light and so become, yourself, a light—and in so doing you run necessary risks. The more brightly you shine, the more will Satan and the world try to quench your light. This, then, is your comfort. The Lord God who is a sun to you will also be a shield to you. Did He not say to Abraham, “Fear not, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward”? He will defend you against the dangers of publicity, or even of popularity! And if He sets you upon a high place, He will make your feet like the feet of a gazelle, so that you shall stand upon your high places.

Consider the text, again, still keeping to this idea of counterbalance. “The Lord God is a sun” and a sun manifests a thing, and this manifestation is not always a joy to us, but we need a defense with it. When the Lord shines in upon the heart of His people, they begin to see their sin, their guilt, their fall, their corruption—and then the Lord is a shield—and they are not overcome by the discovery! When they see the danger, at the same time they see the defense. And when they see the disease they see the remedy. It is a blessed thing not to see sin unless, at the same time, we see the Savior. It is a blessed thing not to have a sense of weakness in self unless it is accompanied with a sense of strength in the Lord. These two things most wisely balance each other, otherwise the revealing Spirit of God, in showing us so much of our evil hearts, might almost drive us mad!

If a man could see all his past sin and all his present danger. If he could see all the trials of his future life, he might lie down in despair, unless, at the same time, he was made to perceive that if the Lord is a sun to reveal our danger, He is also a shield to secure our safety! The Lord, thus, in His Grace, abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence. He multiplies the value of the blessing by His wise way of dispensing it. He gives us the bitter medicine, but He also allots us the sweet cordial. He will sometimes chide, but He will not always do so. He will not give us too much of one blessing lest it spoil and breed overindulgence. He will give us another favor which shall make up a healthful mixture. Yes, thus He does with all things, so that they work together for our good. Dwell on my text and especially on this noteworthy point in it—blessings in their counterbalance.

III. Very briefly let me submit to you the third idea, namely, BLESSINGS IN THEIR ORDER, for there is a due and meet succession in my text. “The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give Grace and Glory.” The Lord is to us first, a sun and then a shield. Remember how David puts it elsewhere—“The Lord is my light and my salvation.” Light first, salvation next! He does not save us in the dark, neither does He shield us in the dark. He gives enough sunlight to let us see the danger that we may appreciate the defense. We are not to shut our eyes and so find safety, but we are to see the evil and hide ourselves! Ought we not to be very grateful to God that He so orders our affairs? Ours is not a blind faith, receiving an unknown salvation from evils which are unperceived— this would be a poor form of life at best. No, the favor received is valued because its necessity is perceived. The heavenly Sun lights up our souls and makes us see our ruin and lie down in the dust of self-despair. And then it is that Grace brings forth the Shield which covers us so that we are no more afraid, but rejoice in the glorious Lord as the God of our salvation.

Then notice the order of the next two things—Grace and Glory—not Glory first. That could not be. We are not fit for it. Neither in body nor in soul are we fit for Glory before Grace. We could not possibly receive Glory while we are sinners, for a glorified sinner would be a strange sight! Grace must first blot out our sin. To take the rebel from the prison and put him among the children would be dangerous work unless his crime were pardoned and reconciled to his king. Grace must come in to change the nature. We could not enter Glory or enjoy it by any possibility while we are sinful at heart. An unregenerate heart could not enter into the joy of the Lord. Only the pure in heart can see God—carnal eyes are blind to spiritual things. Grace must renew us or Glory cannot receive us. Grace must change, regenerate, sanctify, or we cannot take our places among the perfected ones.

Glory without Grace would be mockery! The prepared place would be no Heaven if the people were not also prepared. As in this case there is order, you will find it so in all the arrangements of the Lord’s House. One blessing is a steppingstone to another. The holy leads on to the holiest. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The Lord gives mercies in succession and He never gives you number two till you have been qualified for it by receiving number one! “They go from strength to strength.” He gives life, and then life more abundantly. First Grace and then Grace upon Grace. God abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence, leading us, as we do our boys, from their first-class books up to their classics, and taking care to ground us in each successive ascent of knowledge.

Step by step we rise towards God, until at last we shall see the Savior’s face and shall be like He! Blessings in their order. Treasure this up, for it may be a ground of comfort to you. When you get clamoring for number seven, it may, perhaps, calm you a little if you remember that you must first have number six. Plod on step by step. Walk without fainting from one stage to another and you shall surely come unto the Mountain of God.

IV. Fourthly, and again briefly, BLESSINGS IN PREPARATION AND BLESSINGS IN MATURITY. “The Lord will give Grace and Glory.” Grace is Glory in the bud—you shall see the rod of Aaron full of blooming Graces! But this is not all—Glory is Grace in ripe fruit—the rod shall bear ripe almonds. The Lord will give you both the dawn and the noon, the Alpha and the Omega, Grace and Glory. Let us be very grateful that God deals in preparatory mercies. If He had provided Heaven and we were to make ourselves fit for it, we should never get there! Yes, and there are many stages of spiritual experience which are not to be attained unless God gives us preliminary educating Grace to come at them. The blessing is that all that is necessary to reach any gracious attainment is as much promised as the blessing itself!

Is it so, my poor Friend, that you cannot, this morning, lay hold of a promise? You are such a babe in Grace. Well, our heavenly Father has an infant class in His school and a nursery in His house—He will teach you as a child and give you a child’s portion upon which you shall feed and by which you shall grow! Do not be afraid to ask of God the beginnings of things. I know that sometimes in our prayers we feel that we are so blameworthy for our stupidity that we hardly dare ask to be taught the simple Truths which we ought to know. But we must not give way to this proud humility! We must beg, even, to be taught our A B Cs.

Suppose we need to be helped to overcome an irritable temper, let us not be ashamed to acknowledge the need, but confess it and pray for help. Do we need Grace to bear our little daily trials? Then let us seek everyday Grace. Ask for a babe’s blessings, for God is prepared to give them! Does He not say, “I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms”? “The Lord will give Grace and Glory.” Brothers and Sisters, we shall need much training to fit us to sing among the choristers above! Discords and false notes abound! We must be tutored out of them into a richness of sweet tones and ordered harmonies. If we look into ourselves carefully, we shall be shocked with the sight of our own unworthiness to mingle with perfect beings. I do not know how you feel about yourselves, but I grow worse and worse in my own judgment. I hope that I am more sanctified in many respects, but I am also more conscious of my need of fuller sanctification.

The fact is that the more Light of God a soul obtains, the more it perceives its darkness and laments it. The more God makes you holy, the more unholy you will judge yourself to be. No man groans so deeply, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” as the man who is nearest to complete deliverance from all evil! The last relics of sin are more horrible to the godly man than the full empire of sin to the newly awakened. Even the very thought of sin—the flitting of it through his soul like a bird across the sky—becomes a calamity to the full-grown saint and he cries out against it. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” He who glories that he is perfectly sanctified must either have lowered the standard of holiness or else he has an exaggerated conceit of his own excellence.

He who does not daily struggle against sin is in darkness and error and I fear the life of God is not in his soul. In proportion as God has dealt with a man, he will cry out for a something yet beyond him and press forward to that which is before. Oh, how I long to be perfectly rid of sin and of every liability to fall into it! And here is the mercy—that the Lord will give Grace. All the Grace that is needed to make you absolutely perfect, God will bestow. He will reveal His righteousness from faith to faith and we shall go from Grace to Grace. Faith shall lead on to full assurance—hope shall brighten into expectancy—love shall flame into burning zeal and so we shall rise on eagles’ wings from Grace to Glory! Not only the light of the lamp in its full brilliance, but the wick and the oil and the trimming, the Lord will give. Furthermore, the Lord will not deny you the maturity, namely, Glory. He who gives us breakfast in Grace will cause us to sup with Him in Glory!

Now, here I am altogether beaten. What shall I say of Glory? What do I know of it? Matthew Wilks once said, “Man is the glory of the world; the soul is the glory of man; Grace is the glory of the soul; and Heaven is the Glory of Grace.” This is true, but still, what do any of us know of Glory in its heavenly sense? The Lord will give us nothing less than Glory! We deserve shame—He will give us Glory! We deserve misery, but He will give us Glory. We deserve condemnation, but He will give us Glory! We deserve death and Hell, but He will give us Glory! What is Glory? He that has been in Heaven five minutes can tell you better than the sagest divine that lives and yet he could not tell you! No, the angels could not tell you—you would not understand them!

What is Glory? You must enjoy it to know it. Glory is not merely rest, happiness, wealth, safety—it is honor, victory, immortality, triumph! You know what men call, “glory,” here below. The people climb to the housetops, throng the streets and sound the clarions because a conqueror has returned from war and brings with him huge spoils. See how he stands erect, drawn in his chariot by milk-white steeds. Follow him up the Via Sacra to the Capitol at Rome. Men count him happy because he is surrounded with glory. What is this glory? Smoke, noise, dust and oblivion— that is all.

But Glory, as the Lord uses the term, what is it? It is that which surrounds Himself, for He is the King of Glory! It is that which crowns every attribute, for we read of the Glory of His power and the Glory of His Grace. It is the outcome of all His plans and thoughts and works, for in all things He is glorified! It is that which His dear Son inherits, for He has entered into His Glory. We shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory! Yes, it is of this unutterable thing that we shall partake, and that so soon! “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

V. Now, fifthly and finally, BLESSINGS IN THEIR UNIVERSALITY. I have noticed that lawyers, who will always go into particulars as much as they can in their deeds—an excellent method of adding to their fees— usually are obliged to sum up with a general clause which includes all they have said and all they ought to have said! They use some sweeping final sentence to comprehend all the mentionable and unmentionables— all that can be remembered and all that might be forgotten! Now, the last part of my text is of that character—“No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.”

Is there some good thing which does not come to us by the Lord’s being our Sun? We shall not lose on that account. Is there another good thing which cannot be included in God’s being our Shield? We shall not be deprived of that! Is there some good thing that cannot be comprehended in Grace? I cannot imagine what it can be, but if there is such a thing, we shall not miss even that! Is there some good thing that is not comprehended, even, in Glory? Well, it does not matter, we shall have it, for here stands the boundless promise—“No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.”

“Well,” says someone, “but God has denied me many good things!” Yes, then they would not be good things to you! What has God done to you, then? “He has made me to be sickly in body, He has caused me to be poor, and I am tried in many ways.” In this He has fulfilled His Word that no good thing should be withheld from you. I have known a father who boasted that he never laid a hand on his children by way of chastising them. I sometimes wished that he had done so, for his children were a sad plague to all who called at the house. Now, that father was withholding a good thing from his children—a touch of the birch would have been most wholesome! Our heavenly Father never says of any of His elect, “I never laid a hand upon them”—but it is written, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.”

God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without chastisement! O you who are tried and afflicted, the Lord has not withheld from you the blessing of His rod! Accept trials from God and believe that they are tokens of His love. Is there anything you wish for and cannot get it from God? Then, depend upon it, it would not be a good thing for you! Is there any apparently evil thing which comes to you plenteously and you would gladly avoid it? Depend upon it, it really is a good thing or else the Lord would not have sent it to you! “Alas,” cries one, “there are many good things which I have not received.” Whose fault is that? What does the text say? It does not say, “I will force all My children to enjoy every good thing.” No, but, “No good thing will He withhold.”

There are thousands of mercies that we do not enjoy, not because they are withheld, but because we do not take them! We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves. We are empty because we do not accept the fullness of Christ. If we were to be introduced into some of the depots in London that are full of articles most rich and rare, and the owners were to say, “Now, take whatever you please,” we should help ourselves with a degree of liberality. But when the Lord takes us into the storehouses of His Grace, we have not faith enough to ask for large things! We might have 10 times as much—10,000 times as much—if we would. Many of God’s people are pining on a pittance when they might feast in plenty. They are eating the coarsest meal and wearing the roughest garment—I mean spiritually—and going about sighing and crying! They are doubting and fearing and all the while, there is the bread of Heaven on the table for them, and the robe of Christ’s righteousness is prepared for them to wear! They might dwell at Heaven’s gate, but they condemn themselves to the dunghill!

Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us change all this! If the Lord has said, “No good thing will I withhold,” let us put Him to the test! Among other things, let us ask Him to give us more joy in the Lord—a fuller assurance and confidence in Him—and He will give it to us. Do not let us be poor by self-inflicted poverty, but let us rise to the riches which are presented to us in this blessed text. I wish I knew how to preach from it, but pray, take an hour this afternoon and do with the text as the cow does with the grass when she has been round the meadow and satisfied herself. She lies down and chews the cud. If you will ruminate by meditation you will find more in the text than I shall ever be able to bring out of it. May the Lord feed you upon this choice portion, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE SPARROW AND THE SWALLOW  
NO. 3041

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 30, 1870.

**“Yes, the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O LORD of Hosts, my King, and my God.”  
Psalm 84:3.**

WHEN David was far away from the services of the Tabernacle, he envied the birds that had built their nests near the sacred shrine. And Christians, in like manner, when they are debarred from the holy associations of Christian fellowship and united worship, always sigh over the lost privilege of meeting with their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. With even greater emphasis we may say that when a Christian loses the realization of the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the “Minister of the sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,” then it is, above all other seasons, that he sighs and cries for a renewal of communion with Christ. We would envy any, however poor and insignificant they may be, who can maintain unbroken fellowship with their Lord. And when it falls to our lot, through our own sin or neglect, or in the inscrutable wisdom of Divine Sovereignty, to be, for awhile, spiritually in the dark, seeking our Savior and not finding Him, we would willingly take the place of the godly captive pining in the persecutors’ dungeon, or of the dying yet enraptured saint, if we could but once again enjoy the Presence of our Master! This was David’s state of heart when he languished for the ancient Tabernacle services or, more probably, when he longed for that communion with his Lord which, perhaps, had been suspended together with his attendance upon the public worship of God’s House. It was then, as I believe, that he was inspired to pen this “Pearl of the Psalms,” including the verse upon which I am going to try to speak, praying that the Holy Spirit may enable me to utter words which shall be to the profit of both hearers and readers.

It seems that the birds which came to David’s mind when he wrote this Psalm had found two things—houses for themselves and nests for their young. And these two things Christians find in Christ and also, in a certain sense, in the assemblies of His servants for public worship in His name.

I. First, I want to remind you that CHRISTIANS FIND IN CHRIST AND, IN A CERTAIN SENSE, IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE FAITHFUL, HOUSES FOR THEMSELVES.

Turn to the text and read—“Yes, the sparrow has found a house.” And upon that our first question shall be, What were those creatures that there found a house?

Well, they were only sparrows, yet they found a house near the altars of God and, therefore, David envied them. Now, sparrows are very insignificant things. “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?” said Christ to His disciples. And you and I, dear Friends, when we really know ourselves as we are in God’s sight, are led to feel that because of our sin, we are even more insignificant than sparrows—and to realize that our being blotted out of the universe would be rather a gain to it than a loss! What unworthy creatures we see ourselves to be when once God pours upon us the bright light of His Word! Then we think that any mercy is too great and any blessing is far too good for us to receive. Yet, as the sparrows were permitted to find their house under the eaves of God’s ancient Tabernacle, we, insignificant and worthless as we are, may come and build under the shelter of God’s great House of Mercy. There we may find a safe refuge from every danger, a perfect security for all time, and even for all eternity. O you who think yourselves despised and forgotten, remember that the sparrow has found a house on God’s altar! Come, then, and see if there is not also space there for you! Jesus said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” And the Apostle Paul, writing under Inspiration, says, “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.” Therefore, poor despised one, though you feel yourself to be a nobody, come and welcome to the Savior, come to Him with cheerful confidence, for He will not, He

 cannot reject you!

The sparrows were not only very insignificant, they were also very needy. They needed a house, they needed a place of shelter—and they found it at God’s altar. How needy, also, are we! Though we are insignificant, our needs are anything but insignificant. How much we need! Who can tell what we do not need? Were it not for God’s super abounding mercy, we would all be in Hell. Were it not for His unspeakable goodness, we would, this day, have no hope of Grace, no prospect of pardon, no assurance of a holy, happy hereafter in Heaven. Our needs are countless—every moment brings a fresh one—and all the supplies of the past and the present are not sufficient to meet the voracious demands that will come upon us in the future. The sparrow, needy creature that she was, having nothing to bring to God’s House, found there a house freely given to her and, you needy souls, the infinite supply of Divine Mercy in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is freely given to you! You need not bring anything with you when you come to Christ, only come and trust Him, and all your needs shall be supplied. Whatever your souls can need to bear them safely through the troubles of earth—and bring them to the bliss of Heaven—you shall have it freely given to you if you do but come flying with the wings of faith to find a house and a home in Jesus Christ. At the great altar where Christ was offered as the one Sacrifice for sin forever, the most needy soul that ever lived on the face of the earth will find a hearty welcome!

These sparrows were uninvited guests, yet they found a house and took possession of it. And they were never blamed for doing so. But in this verse David seems to commend them—he certainly envied them. But, my dear Hearers, you who have never come to the Lord Jesus Christ are not uninvited guests. The Gospel invitation rings through this building every Sabbath day—

*“Come and welcome,*

*Come to Jesus, Sinner, come!”*  
We not only invite you, but we earnestly press you, in Christ’s name, to come and put your trust in His great Sacrifice, assuring you that if you do, you shall find an everlasting and blessed home for your souls. So, as the sparrows came to God’s House without an invitation, will not you come to Christ with one? They were bold enough to find a house when no man bade them do so. Therefore will not you be bold enough, trembler though you are, to take what Divine Mercy freely proffers to you? Do you not remember how Agur commends the spider as being “exceedingly wise” because she “takes hold with her hands and is in kings’ palaces”? No one ever asked the spider to come into the palace. She was a loathsome creature, quite out of place in a palace, and her web would mar the beauty of the place, yet the spider knew by instinct that a storm was coming on and so sought shelter in the king’s palace. There was Solomon’s fine house of the forest of Lebanon, and the spider said within herself, “Why should not I, spider though I am, abide here?” So she crept about till she found a window open and in she slipped and made herself at home by taking hold with her hands, first of one wall and then of another, till she found herself at ease! There came along one who said, “Let that spider and her web be removed. What business has she to be here?” But Solomon thought otherwise, so the spider is immortalized in this Book of Proverbs, because of her wisdom in taking hold with her hands even on the walls of a royal palace!

O Soul, perhaps you are consciously to yourself as loathsome as that spider was, and the King’s great House of Mercy seems too fair a place for you to enter! You ask, unbelievingly, “Shall I ever be made a saint? Shall I ever be cleansed from sin? Shall I ever be taken up to dwell with the great King in Heaven?” Talk not so, but rather see whether you cannot find an entrance into the King’s palace! And if you can find it, go in! Surely there is a window open for you where it is written by the King, Himself, as I reminded you just now, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Then there is another window where the King has hung up the invitation, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Does not that invite you? Come in, poor spidersinner! Take hold of the walls of Christ’s great House of Love and Mercy, and I can assure you that my royal Master will not be angry with you! But when He sees you there, He will immortalize you in His “Book of Life.” You shall have a name and a place there and He will think you wise, not intrusive, in daring to believe Him and to come into His palace, spider-sinner as you are! He delights to have great things thought of Him—and if you will but think great things of His love and mercy, I will guarantee you that you will never think thoughts that shall outstrip the reality, for what He has said is true, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Let us learn, then, from the sparrow finding her house near to God’s altar, that although we are inconsiderable and insignificant, although we are full of needs and although we may even deem ourselves to be uninvited, yet we are at liberty to come to the Savior and find in Him our eternal dwelling place!

Next, what does the text tell us that these sparrows did? We should learn something from that.  
The text says, “Yes, the sparrow has found a house.” Then, first of all, she looked for it. The sparrow needed a house and she searched to see where she could find it. One great reason why many do not find salvation is because they do not look for it. Many of them do not even know that they need it or, if they know it as a matter of doctrine, they do not believe it so as to look for it and appropriate it as their own. I feel persuaded that no man ever did sincerely seek salvation, through Jesus Christ, without finding it. I do not believe that among all the lost, there is one who will be able to tell the Lord that he honestly and earnestly sought His mercy, yet did not obtain it. If you have not found Christ, my dear Hearer, it is because you have not sought Him, for He said, “He that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” I grant you that the blessing may be delayed for awhile—you may be some time in finding peace, perhaps through your ignorance, or through some cherished sin that you have not given up—but if you truly come to the Throne of Grace and cry in real earnest for mercy, as surely as God is in Christ Jesus, He will stretch out His silver scepter toward you and you shall touch it and find Grace in His sight! Be encouraged, O you Seekers, to persevere in your search for salvation! Ask that the aid of the Holy Spirit may be given to you that you may wisely and rightly seek the way of faith and may speedily find it!  
Further, “the sparrow found a house”—then there was a house for her, or she could not have found it. A traveler in Palestine writes in his journal that as he was wandering among the ruins on the site of the Temple at Jerusalem, he noticed a little bird—known in the Hebrew as tzippor, or sparrow—fly out of a crevice between two great stones where the mortar or cement had been removed—and he thought at once of these words, “The sparrow has found a house.” That is just what David meant. The sparrow no doubt found a little vacant place, just what she wanted, and in she went and there was her “house” ready-made for her! And let me say to you, O Seeker, that if you would find rest in Christ, there is rest prepared for you in Him! He who has prepared your heart to seek Him has prepared that which you would gladly find. It is not for you to make a salvation for yourself—your salvation is finished and you have but to find it. It is not for you to make an Atonement for yourself—the one Atonement for sin was made, once and for all, on Calvary! It is not for you to make a righteousness for yourself—the righteousness that Christ Jesus worked out for you is perfect and you may not add thereto any supposed righteousness of your own. If you are an honest seeker after Christ, for you there is already prepared by those dear hands that once were pierced for you, the salvation that shall lift you up from the depths of sin to the heights of Glory! As Bunyan said—“Does not your mouth water as you hear this? Do you not say, ‘Is all this really prepared for me?’ Then why do I not have it?” Ah, why not, why not indeed? In my Master’s name, I assure you that “all things are ready” for all who will seek Him, for every soul that will trust Him. If you seek Him not. If you will not believe, there is no mercy for you! But if you seek heartily and trustfully, you shall assuredly find it, for it was prepared for you long ago by Him who has gone to Heaven to prepare Glory, having already prepared Grace for you!  
“Yes, the sparrow has found a house.” That also means that when she had discovered it, she appropriated it. There was the little place, so snug and cozy, just on the warm side of the Tabernacle where the South wind would blow and she would be shielded from the cold—and in went the little bird. She had found it and she took care to make it her own by personal appropriation. Now, we may find Christ, in a sense, so as to know much about Him, to read about Him, to hear about Him and even to understand much about Him, yet not truly find Him. The root of the matter is to get Christ for yourself! In this respect, you must be selfish and you can thus be selfish without being sinful. You must personally lay hold of Christ if you would be saved!  
One who desired to teach a little girl this lesson, tried to do it when the child was waiting upon him while he was ill. “Please pour out my medicine, Jane,” said the sick man. And when it was poured out, he said to her. “Now, Jane, take that medicine for me.” “O Sir!” she said. “I would willingly do it, if it were the right thing to do, but the medicine would not do you any good if I took it.” “You’re right,” he said, “and as I must personally take the medicine before it can do me good, my child, you must personally believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or else another person’s faith will do you no good.” The idea of anything like sponsorship in religion—one person vowing and promising certain things for another—is utterly without any foundation in the Word of God! Religion is wholly and only a

 personal thing—you must repent for yourself, believe for yourself and lay hold on Christ for yourself! It would have been no benefit to that little bird if all other sparrows had found houses for themselves if she, herself, had been driven about, shelterless, in the storm. Oh, no—she must have a house for herself, “and the swallow a nest for herself,” where she might lay her young.  
You and I, dear Friends, will be wise if we do as this sparrow did, for she found a house for herself because she looked for it. She found it because it was already there for her and she found it by appropriating it so that it became her very own. Thus may we appropriate the Lord Jesus Christ—by an act of faith—and so make Him our very own!  
I have, at various times, learned some lessons concerning living by faith. A friend frequently drives me through the streets of London and, one day, when all the cabs and wagons seemed to leave us no room to move, I said to him, more than once, “I am afraid we shall have an accident.” When I had said that to him, perhaps for the third time, he put the reins into my hand and said, “Here, if you cannot trust me, drive yourself.” Suppose God should say to us when we fear that we are getting into difficulties, “If you cannot trust Me, arrange for yourselves”? What a position we would be in then! If He left the reins in our hands for a single hour, we would be like the one who sought to drive the chariot of the sun and set the world a-blaze! When we leave all in the hands of God—and we must leave all there whether we are willing or not—then we can sing that sweet little song which Luther said that the sparrows always sing— *“Mortal, cease from care and sorrow,  
God provides for the morrow.”*  
May we all be able to sing that little song and to sing it to ourselves, too!  
We will further prolong this simile by noticing what the sparrow found.  
“Yes, the sparrow has found a house.” The word is a very simple one, but there is much meaning in it. And when we find, in the Lord Jesus Christ, a house for our souls, we find safety in Him, even as the sparrow found safety in her “house.” When the stormy wind blew all around her, the sparrow felt safe in her house hard by the altar in God’s ancient Tabernacle. And when the storm of conscience beats upon us, we feel safe in our hiding place in the altar where Jesus suffered for us! And when the last dreadful storm of Divine Judgment shall come, we shall be safe beneath the shelter of the Atonement that He offered upon Calvary. He that believes in Jesus is safe forever! When the earth and all its works are burned up and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, no hurt shall come to the man to whom Jesus is “a hiding place from the wind and a shelter from the tempest.”  
Next to safety, we find rest in Christ. The soul that is out of Christ knows not what true rest is, but, “we who have believed do enter into rest.”—  
*“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done!  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine!”*  
My salvation is finished, my sins are pardoned, my security is established by the promise and oath of God, Himself, ratified by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. If this is your happy condition, you can enjoy the blissful sleep of the Beloved of the Lord, “and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Just as the little sparrow felt perfectly at rest when she had entered her “house” in the Tabernacle, so do we, come what may, enjoy complete, absolute, unbroken rest when we have truly believed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You!”  
Further, a house is a place of abode. The sparrow lived in her house in the Tabernacle—and he who finds the Lord Jesus Christ, finds in Him a spiritual abode—he lives in Christ. He has heard his Master’s blessed command, “Abide in Me,” and he desires to dwell there, hard by the pierced heart of Jesus. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you have not a mere temporary lodging place, out of which you may someday be driven back into the cold world where you used to live. That would be a poor prospect for us—but we need not anticipate such a sad future, for we can say with Moses, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” And He always will be, blessed be His holy name!  
Once more, a house is, or ought to be, a place of delight. When a man reaches his home, he is at his ease and can unwind himself. If he is not happy at home, where can he be happy? The little sparrow, when it reaches its home, is perfectly content. Its day’s work is over, its day’s needs are supplied, and it chirps its evening song of joy. So when we make our abode in Christ our soul is filled with delight! We have a bliss that is not only full to the brim, but it even overflows. Truly happy are those who are Christ’s servants, thrice happy are they who are looking alone to His Cross for their salvation!  
But the point upon which David seemed to lay the greatest emphasis was that the sparrow’s house was near to God’s earthly dwelling place and oh, when we abide in Christ, how near we are to God! You remember how Christ prayed to His Father concerning His disciples, “That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You...I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” No nearness imaginable can be greater than Christ’s nearness to His Father! Yet, as we are in Christ, we are, in His Person, as near even as He is!  
I can only spare a minute or so for the secondary meaning which may be found in our text. In a certain sense, Christians, like the sparrow, find a house in the assemblies of the saints.  
When the sparrow went to her house in the Tabernacle, she never needed to be driven there, but she went there of her own accord. And I trust that when we came up to our solemn assemblies, we need nothing to compel us to come, but that our own delightful remembrances of fellowship with God, in seasons past, make us long for the renewal of such seasons again and again! I hate to see people going to any place of worship as if they were being marched off to jail. But I rejoice to see them come up to the House of God with alacrity and holy joy, and with fleet footsteps as if they were delighted to think that the time had come when they could once more unite with their Brothers and Sisters in worship before the Throne of the Most High God. If you, like the sparrow, have found a house in God’s House, you will go there with joy! And when you are there, you will be happy to be there. And when the service is over, you will wish that it had to begin again and you will long for the time when you will reach that city of God—  
*“Where congregations never break up,  
And Sabbaths have no end!”*  
There are many poor people here who scarcely ever have any peace except when they are sitting in this House of Prayer and who find here the richest enjoyments they ever know. I know some of God’s afflicted children who have but little sacred mirth except when the holy hymn goes up in glorious peals to Heaven and they can join in it— *“Then they forget their pains a while,  
And in the pleasure lose the smart.”*  
Cultivate more and more your love for the assemblies of the saints! We have no reverence for bricks and mortar, stones and wood, glass and iron—we do not believe in the sanctity of any one place above others— but we have a reverence for the living Temple of God, built up of living men and living women whose hearts are sanctified by the Holy Spirit! And we can say of their assemblies—  
*“I have been there, and still will go,  
‘Tis like a little Heaven below”—*  
and we can also say—  
*“There my best friends, my kindred dwell, There God my Savior reigns.”*  
The sparrow has found a house and we too have found a house, where God’s people meet, and of that house we sing—  
*“Here do I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come,  
No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”*

II. After a man is himself saved, his first anxiety, if he is a father, will be concerning his children. The next clause of the text will be helpful to such parents—“The swallow (has found) a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.” Every Christian should think that what is good for himself is good for his children! He who does not labor and pray for the salvation of his own offspring has good reason to doubt whether he knows the Grace of God, himself. Believing parents cry, with Thomas Hastings—

*“God of mercy, hear our prayer  
For the children You have given!  
Let them all Your blessings share,  
Grace on earth, and bliss in Heaven.”*

Children should early be brought to the House of God! To keep to the figure of the text, THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE SAINTS SHOULD BE A NEST FOR OUR LITTLE ONES.

First, because they are safe there. At any rate, you need not fear that they will be hurt when they are where God is being worshipped in spirit and in truth. In the Sunday school, under the loving tuition of godly people, they will be safe. We never feel any need to ask whether they will be in a place of danger when we take them with us where Christ is preached and His Gospel is simply, earnestly and faithfully proclaimed. Bring, then, your children with you to the House of God, for it is a place where you may expect that your little ones, as well as yourselves, will be blessed.

The “swallow” is expressed, in the Hebrew, by a word which signifies liberty. It is the bird of freedom. It is not to be caged. Even a whole continent does not give room enough for its rapid, untiring flight over hill and dale, mountain and plain, so it crosses the ocean and flies to other lands far away. The swallow is the bird of liberty, yet David writes of one that found her nest where she might lay her young at God’s altar—and if you want your children to be truly free, train them in the fear of God and the love of His Truth. The spirit of liberty will always be maintained in this land as long as we have the open Bible, the family altar and the training up of our children in the way that they should go. But take these things away and Popery will again enchain our country and bring back the curse from which our fathers set free our land even at the cost of their own lives!

Further, the nest is a place of delight to the little birds and so ought the House of God to be to children. And so it would be if preachers would always seek to make their language simple and would illustrate what they have to say so that the children can comprehend it. It is a bad sign concerning any man’s ministry when the children do not understand him! I always look upon it as being one of the highest compliments I ever receive when I see some little boy’s or girl’s bright eyes, that are all too apt to wander here and there, fixed upon me while they seem to be drinking in what I have to say. There is a great lack in the preachers of the present day in this respect—we need to have the Master’s words to Peter, “Feed My lambs,” as well as the command, “Feed My sheep,” more and more impressed upon our hearts! May you, Beloved, find a place of prayer for your children where it shall be their delight to go with you and to join intelligently in the worship of God.

When you take them there—as I have already hinted to you, they are in the way that the blessing is often given. I do not say that they will all be saved through coming to God’s House, but if they are there with you, He who called you by His Grace, may also call them. And that everblessed Spirit who led you to find the Savior may also lead them to Him. Bring them to Bethesda, “the house of mercy,” and pray to Christ to say to them, as He said to the impotent man, “Will you be made whole?...Rise...and walk.” At any rate, do not let your children miss the blessing through neglecting to use the means which the Lord has blessed to you and to many others, both old and young.

Your children, if you take them with you to God’s House, will be like the swallows in this respect, they will be pretty sure to return to the nest even if they leave it for awhile. Though the swallows may fly over the deep blue sea to the lands that are far away, yet when the next season comes, they find their way back again to the old nest and home. So, though some of our sons and daughters may grow up and leave the House of God for awhile, they cannot altogether forget it. The recollection of their father’s prayers and of their mother’s tears will follow them wherever they roam. Refrain your eyes from weeping, dear mothers! Your sons and daughters shall come back again! Possibly, when you sleep beneath the clods of the valley, they will recollect what they heard when, as children, you took them with you to the House of God. Words that have been forgotten for 50 years may yet ring in their souls and lead to their eternal salvation! At any rate, as the swallows found a nest for their young at God’s altar, mind that you Christian parents make the House of God your children’s house. Associate them, as far as you can, with all that is going on there so that they shall feel at home when they go with you to the place where you worship the Lord and serve Him.

But after all it is not the main thing to merely bring our children to the House of God—oh, that we could bring them to Christ! That is where we long to lay our young, for only there shall they be truly safe, happy and blessed! Christian parents, can you rest content as long as your children are unconverted? I am ashamed of you if you can! Do you say that you hope they will be converted in future years? I hope so, too, but are you not concerned that they are out of Christ now? Perhaps you remind me of what I said just now, that your instruction may be blessed to their salvation long after you have been called Home. Yes, I recollect that I said that and I do not wish to withdraw what I said—yet I would like to ask whether you are willing to run the fearful risk of your children dying unsaved? The objective of parents, preachers and teachers should be that children should be saved while they are children! That while they are yet young their names should be enrolled in the army of the Church militant!

How can we lay our children before Christ, as the swallow laid her young before God’s altar? I answer, first, by prayer. The Lord will hear our prayers for our children as He heard our fathers’ prayers for us. Example will also help toward the end we have in view—godly example at home. And personal precept will also help. We must talk to our children, one by one, alone, about their souls. I am afraid that some of you parents do not do this. But if you do not see your children grow up to do what is right, you will have to blame yourselves because you never personally pleaded with them to flee from the wrath to come. I know that the words of my father with me, alone, when he prayed for me and bade me pray for myself—not to use any form of prayer, but to pray just as I felt and to ask from God what I felt that I really needed—left an impression upon my mind that will never be erased. I have heard of an idiot who was one day scouring a brass plate to get the name out. But the more he scoured, the more clearly it shone! And when the devil tries to erase the impressions made upon my mind and heart by my mother’s tears and my father’s prayers, he is as much like an idiot as he possibly could be, for, let him scour as he may, those impressions will never be removed, but will continue to shine yet more brightly!

Do, dear Christian parents, resolve that if your children perish, it shall not be through any fault of yours. But why should they perish? Why should I suppose that such a thing is possible? “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Did not Paul and Silas say to the jailer at Philippi, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house”? Do not be content with being saved yourselves! Say, “No, my Master, I cannot be put off with half Your promise—it is, ‘and your house,’ and I would gladly have it all, and see my children—and if I live long enough, their children, too, all encompassed in the arms of Your love and all of them saved.” Brothers and Sisters, if you are like the sparrow, and have found a house, now be like the swallow and find not only a nest for yourself, but a place where you may lay your young, even God’s altar upon which Christ offered His great atoning Sacrifice.

I wonder what other birds are represented here. Alas! Alas! I fear that I am addressing some who will not heed what I have been saying. They are not like the sparrow and the swallow. Perhaps they are like the eagle that was far too ambitious to think of building her nest anywhere near God’s altar—too fond of soaring and struggling, too fond of high and lofty things. But there will come a time when the pride of man shall be laid low. Beware, beware, you who are like the eagle! Possibly there is one here who is like the vulture—far too foul to think of building in God’s House! He is fond of everything that is unclean—wicked amusements and sinful pleasures, which are sadly miscalled, “pleasures.” Ah, the time will come when sin will be as bitter to you as now it is sweet! Yes, and far more so, for it “will eat as does a canker.” When you come to the dregs of the cup of sinful pleasure, you shall find that there is Hell in them and that forever! Or, perhaps there is one here who is like the cormorant who will not build on God’s House because he is far too greedy after the world, seeking to gather gold and to amass property. Ah, Sir! Have you never heard of the rich fool whose soul was required of him the very night on which he boasted of his wealth? Play not you the fool, but be willing to leave all those things and come and seek enduring riches!

If you do not care for your own souls, it must seem to you an idle task for me to talk to you about your children, yet I will venture to say to any unconverted person here that it will increase his misery intolerably to see his children lost through his own example! If you must perish—if you are resolved to perish—why need you drag your child down with you? If you must drink, why need that boy of yours be taught the base habit into which you have fallen? If you will swear, do not let your child hear you. I would not have you swear at all, but if you will do so, why should your child learn from you to curse and blaspheme God? O Sirs, you will find it dreadful enough to perish, yourselves, but to bring down one, two, three—I know not how many children you have—to bring them down, one after the other to that same place of awful and eternal misery—what a terrible increase to your own wretchedness! You could not look at your dear child’s face and then do him harm. I know that you would not touch him so as to break a bone, or do his body any injury. No, you pat his curly head, and say, “God bless you!” Yes, but why do you then do injury to his soul by your evil example? Why do you take your boy where you know he will learn no good and much harm? How dare you take him to places where the amusement is defiled and defiling, lascivious, unclean? No, if you really mean it when you say, “God bless my boy!” then live so that you will bless him by your example! May you be saved yourself, and then may you be a true parent to your children for immortality as well as for time! May these words abide with you and God bless them, so that we and our children may meet in Heaven, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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TWO COVERINGS AND TWO CONSEQUENCES  
NO. 3500

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1916. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“He that covers his sins shall not prosper.”  
Proverbs 38:13.  
“You have covered all their sins.”  
Psalm 85:2.

IN THESE two texts we have man’s covering, which is worthless and culpable—and God’s covering, which is profitable, and worthy of all acceptation! No sooner had man disobeyed his Maker’s will in the Garden of Eden than he discovered, to his surprise and dismay, that he was naked—and he set about at once to make himself a covering. It was a poor attempt which our first parents made, and it proved a miserable failure. “They sewed fig leaves together.” After that, God came in, revealed to them yet more fully their nakedness, made them confess their sin, brought their transgression home to them, and then it is written— “The Lord God made them coats of skin.” Probably the coats were made of the skins of animals which had been offered in sacrifice, and, if so, they were a fit type of Him who has provided us with a sin-offering and a robe of perfect righteousness! Every man since the days of Adam has gone through much of the same experience, more or less relying on his own ingenuity to hide his own confusion of face. He has discovered that sin has made him naked and he has set to work to clothe himself. As I shall have to show you, presently, he has never succeeded. But God has been pleased to deal with His own people according to the riches of His Grace—He has covered their shame and put away their sins that they should not be remembered any more.

Let me now direct your attention, first, to man’s covering, and its failure. And then to God’s covering, and its perfection.  
May the Holy Spirit be pleased to give you discernment, that you may see your destitute state in the Presence of God, and understand the merciful relief that God, Himself, has provided in the bounty of His Grace!  
I. MAN’S COVERING.  
There are many ways in which men try to cover their sin. Some do so by denying that they have sinned, or, admitting the fact, they deny the guilt! Or else, candidly acknowledging both the sin and the guilt, they excuse and exonerate themselves on the plea of certain circumstances which rendered it, according to their showing, almost inevitable that they should act as they have done. By pretext and pretence, apology and selfvindication, they acquit themselves of all criminality and put a fine gloss upon every foul delinquency! Excuse-making is the most common trade under Heaven! The slenderest materials are put to the greatest account. A man who has no valid argument in arrest of judgment, no feasible reason why he should not be condemned, will go about and bring a thousand excuses and ten thousand circumstances of extenuation—the whole of them weak and thin as a spider’s web. Someone here may be saying within himself, “It may be I have broken the Law of God, but it was too severe. To keep so perfect a Law was impossible. I have violated it, but then I am a man, endowed with passions that involve propensities and inflamed with desires that need gratification. How could I do otherwise than I have done? Placed in peculiar circumstances, I am borne along with the current. Subject to special temptations, I yield to the fascination, but this is only natural!” So you think. So you essay to exculpate yourself. But, in truth, you are now committing a fresh sin, for you are abasing God, you are inculpating the Almighty! You are impugning the Law of God to vindicate yourself for breaking it! There is no small degree of criminality about such an unrighteous defense. The Law is holy, just and good. You are throwing the onus of your sins upon God! You are trying to make out that, after all, you are not to blame, but the fault lies with Him who gave the commandment. Do you think that this will be tolerated? Shall the prisoner at the bar bring accusations against the Judge who tries him? Or shall he challenge the equity of the statute while he is arraigned for violating it? And as for the circumstances that you plead, what valid excuse can they furnish? Has it come to this—that it was not you, but your necessities, that did the wrong and are answerable for the consequence? Not you, indeed! You are a harmless innocent victim of circumstances! I suppose, instead of being censured, you ought almost to be pitied. What is this, again, but throwing the blame upon the arrangements of Providence and saying to God, “It is the harshness of Your discipline, not the perverseness of my actions, that involves me in sin.” What? I say, is this but a high impertinence, yes, veritable treason against the Majesty of that thrice holy God, before whom even perfect angels veil their faces, while they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts”? I pray you resort not to such a covering as this, because, while it is utterly useless, it adds sin to sin and exposes you to fresh shame!  
In many cases persons violating the Law of God have hoped to cover their transgression by secrecy. They have done the deed in darkness. They hope that no ear of man heard their footfall, or listened to their speech. Possibly they themselves held their tongue and flattered themselves that no observer witnessed their movements or could divulge their action. So was it with Achan. I dare say he took the wedge of gold and the Babylonian garment mid the confusion of the battle and hid it when his comrades seemed too much engaged to notice so trivial an affair. While they were rushing over the fallen walls of Jericho, amidst the debris and the dust, he might be unmolested and then, in the dead of night, while they slept, he turned the sod of his tent, dug into the earth, and buried there his coveted treasure. All looks right to his heart’s content. He has smoothed it down, and spread his carpet over the grave of his lust. Little did he reckon of the Omniscient eyes! Little did he count on the unerring lot that would come home to the tribe of Judah, to the family of the Zarhites, to the house of Zabdir and, at last, to the son of Carmi, so that Achan, himself, would have to stand out confessed as a traitor—a robber of his God! Men little know the ways in which the Almighty can find them out and bring the evidence that convicts out of the devices that were intended to cover their sin!  
Do you not know that Providence is a wonderful detective? There are hounds upon the track of every thief, and murderer, and liar—in fact upon every sinner of every kind! Each sin leaves a trail. The dogs of judgment will be sure to scent it out and find their prey. There is no disentangling yourselves from the meshes of guilt—no possibility of evading the penalty of transgression! Very amazing have been the ways in which persons who have committed crimes have been brought to judgment. A trifle becomes a tell-tale. The method of deceit gives a clue to the manner of discovery. Wretched the men who bury their secrets in their own bosom! Their conscience plays traitor to them. They have often been forced to betray themselves. We have read of men talking in their sleep to their fellows and babbling out in their dreams the crime they had committed years before! God would have the secret disclosed. No eye had seen, neither could other tongue have told, but the man turned king’s evidence against himself—he has thus brought himself to judgment! It has often happened, in some form or other, that conscience has thus been witness against men.  
Do I address anyone who is just now practicing a secret sin? You would not have me point you out for all the world, nor shall I do so. Believe me, however, the sin is known! Dexterous though you have been in the attempt to conceal it, it has been seen. As surely as you live, it has been seen. “By whom?” you ask. Ah, by One who never forgets what He sees, and will be sure to tell of it. He may commission a little bird of the air to whisper it. Certainly He will one day proclaim it by the sound of trumpet to listening worlds! You are watched, Sir—you are known! You have been narrowly observed, young girl—those things you have hidden away will be brought to light—for God is the great discoverer of sin! His eyes have marked you! His Providence will track you! It is vain to think that you can conceal your transgressions. Before high Heaven, disguise is futile! Yes, the darkness hides not—the night shines as the day. I have known persons who have harbored a sin in their breast till it has preyed upon their constitution. They have been like the Spartan boy who had stolen a fox and was ashamed to have it known, so he kept it within his garment till it ate through his flesh, and he fell dead. He allowed the fox to gnaw his heart before he would betray himself! There are those who have got a sin, if not a lie in their right hand, yes, a lie in their heart and it is eating into their very life! They dare not confess it. If they would confess it to their God and make restitution to those whom they have offended, they would soon come to peace, but they vainly hope that they can cover the sin and hide it from the eyes of God and man. He that covers his sin in this fashion shall not prosper.  
Again, full many a time sinners have tried to cover their sin with lies. Indeed, this is the usual habit—to lie—to cloak their guilt by denying it. Was not this the way with Gehazi? When the Prophet said, “Where have you come from, Gehazi?” he said, “Your servant went nowhere.” Then the Prophet told him that the leprosy of Naaman would cleave to him all the days of his life. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira, in lying in order to hide their sin—how quickly was it discovered—and how terrible was the retribution! I am amazed that men and women can lie as they do after reading that story! “Have you sold the land for so much?” asked Peter. And Ananias said, “Yes, for so much.” At that instant he fell down and gave up the ghost! Three hours after, when his wife, Sapphira, said the same, the feet of the young men who had buried her husband were at the door, ready to carry out her corpse and bury her by his side. Oh, Sirs, you must weave a tangled web, indeed, when once you begin to deceive! And when you have woven it, you will have to add lie to lie, and lie to lie, and yet all to no purpose, for you will be surely found out! There is something about a lie that always deludes the man who utters it. Liars have need of good memories. They are sure to leave a little corner uncovered through which the truth escapes. Their story does not hang together. Discrepancies excite suspicions and evasions furnish a clue to discoveries, till the naked truth is unveiled. Then the deeper the plot, the fouler is the shame! But to lie unto the God of Truth, of what use can that be? What advantage is it to you to plead, “not guilty,” when He has witnessed your crime? Those Infallible eyes which never make a mistake are never closed. He knows everything—from Him no secret is hid. Why, therefore, do you imagine that you can deceive your Maker?  
There are some who try to cover their sin by prevarication. With cunning subtlety they strive to evade personal responsibility. Memorable is the instance of David. I will not dwell upon his flagrant crime, but I must remind you of his sorry subterfuge, when he tried to hide the baseness of his lust by conspiring to cause the death of Uriah. There have been those who have schemed deep and long to throw the blame on others, even to the injury of their reputation, to escape the odium of their own malpractices! Who knows but in this congregation there may be someone who affects a high social position, supported by a deep mercantile immorality? Merchants there have been that have swollen before the public as men of wealth, while they were falsifying their accounts, abstracting money, yet making the books tally, rolling in luxury and living in jeopardy. Have they prospered? Were they to be envied? The detection that long haunted them at length overtook them—could they look it in the face? We have heard of their blank despair, their insane suicide—at any rate, a miserable exposure has been their melancholy climax. “Be sure your sin will find you out.” You may run the length of your tether. It is short. The hounds of justice, swift of scent and strong of limb, are on your trail. Rest assured, you will be discovered. Could you escape the due reward in this life, yet certainly your guilt is known in Heaven and you shall be judged and condemned in that Great Day which shall decide your eternal destiny! Seek not, then, to cover up sin with such transparent cobwebs as these!

Some people flatter themselves that their sin has already been hidden away by the lapse of time. “It was so very long ago,” says one, “I had almost forgotten it—I was a lad at the time.” “Yes,” says another, “I am gray-headed now. It must have been 20 or 30 years ago. Surely you do not think that the sin of my far-off days will be brought out against me? The thing is gone by. Time must have obliterated it.” Not so, my Friend! It may be the lapse of time will only make the discovery the more clear. A boy once went into his father’s orchard and there in his rough play he broke a little tree which his father valued. But, rapidly putting it together again, he managed to conceal the fact, for the disunited parts of the tree took kindly to each other, and the tree stood as before. It so happened that more than 40 years afterwards he went into that garden after a storm had blown across it in the night, and he found that the tree had been split in two, and it had snapped precisely in the place where he had broken it when it was but a sapling. So there may come a crash to your character precisely in that place where you sinned when yet a lad! Ah, how often the transgressions of our youth remain within our bosoms! There lie the eggs of our young sin—and they hatch when men come into riper years. Don’t be so sure that the lapse of time will consign your faults and follies to oblivion. You sowed your wild oats, Sir—you have got to reap them! The time that has intervened has only operated to make that evil seed spring up and you are so much the nearer to the harvest. Time does not change the hue of sin in the sight of God. If a man could live a thousand years, the sins of his first year would be as fresh in the memory of the Almighty as those of the last. Eternity itself will never wash out a sin! Flow on, you ages, but the scarlet spot is on the sand. Flow on, still, in mighty streams, but the damning spot is still there. Neither time nor eternity can cleanse it. Only one thing can remove sin! The lapse of time cannot. Let not any of you be so foolish as to hope it will!  
When the trumpet of the Resurrection sounds, there will be a resurrection of characters, as well as of men! The man who has been foully slandered will rejoice in the light that reflects his purity. But the man whose latent vices have been skillfully veneered will be brought to the light, too. His acts and motives will be alike exposed. As he himself looks and sees the resurrection of his crimes, with what horror will he face that Day of Judgment! “Ah, ah,” he says, “Where am I? I had forgotten these! These are the sins of my childhood, the sins of my youth, the sins of my manhood, and the sins of my old age. I thought they were dead and buried, but they start from their tombs! My memory has been quickened. How my brain reels as I think of them all! But there they are, and, like so many wolves around me, they seem all thirsting for my destruction.” Beware, oh, men! You have buried your sins, but they will rise up from their graves and accuse you before God. Time cannot cover them.  
Or do any of you imagine that your tears can blot out transgressions? That is a gross mistake. Could your tears forever flow. Could you be transformed into a Niobe, and do nothing else but weep for years, the whole flood could not wash out a single sin! Some have supposed that there may be efficacy in baptismal water, or in sacramental emblems, or in priestly incantations, or in confession to a priest—one who asks them to disclose their secret wickedness to him—and betrays a morbid avidity to make his breast the sewer into which all kinds of uncleanness should be emptied! Be not deceived! There is nothing in these ordinances of man, or these tricks of Romish priestcraft (I had almost said of witchcraft, the two are so much alike) to excuse the folly of those who are beguiled by them. You need not catch at straws when the rope is thrown out to you. There is pardon to be had! Remission is to be found! Forgiveness can be procured! Turn your back on yonder priests—lend not your ears to them, neither be you the victims of their snares! In the street each day it makes one’s soul sad to see them. Like the Pharisees of old, they wear their long garments to deceive. You cannot mistake them. Their silly conceit publishes their naked shame. Confide not in them for a moment. Christ can forgive you. God can blot out your sin. But they cannot ease your conscience by their penances, or remove your transgressions by their celebrations.  
Thus I have gone through a rough, not very accurate list of the ways by which men hope to cover their sin, but they “shall not prosper.” None of these shall succeed.  
A more joyous task devolves on me now, while I draw your attention to my second text, “You have covered all their sin.”  
II. GOD’S COVERING.  
This fact is affirmed concerning the people of God. All who have trusted in the atoning Sacrifice which was presented by the Lord Jesus Christ upon Calvary may accept this welcome assurance, “God has covered all their sin.” How this has come to pass I will tell you. Before ever God covers a man’s sins He unveils them. Did you ever see your sins unveiled? Did it ever seem as if the Lord put His hand upon you, and said, “Look, look at them”? Have you been led to see your sins as you never saw them before? Have you felt their aggravations fit to drive you to despair? As you have looked at them, has the finger of detection seemed to point out your blackness? Have you discovered in them a depth of guilt, iniquity, and Hell—which never struck your mind before? I recollect a time when that was a spectacle always before the eyes of my conscience. My sin was always before me. If God thus makes you see your sin in the light of His Countenance, depend upon it, He has His purposes of mercy toward you. When you see and confess it, He will blot it out. So soon as God, in Infinite loving kindness, makes the sinner know in truth that he is a sinner, and strips him of the rags of his self-righteousness, He grants him pardon and clothes his nakedness! While he stands shivering before the gaze of the Almighty, condemned, the guilt is purged from his conscience! I do not know of a more terrible position in one’s experience than to stand with an angry God gazing upon you and to know that wherever God’s eyes fall upon you they see nothing but sin—see nothing in you but what He must hate and must abhor! Yet this is the experience through which God puts those to whom He grants forgiveness! He makes them know that He sees how sinful they are and He makes them feel how vile and leprous they are. His Justice withers their pride! His judgment appalls their heart! They are humbled in the very dust, and made to cry out—each man trembling for his own soul—“God be merciful to me, a sinner!”  
Not till this gracious work of conviction is fully worked does the Lord appear with the glorious proclamation that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus shall have his sins covered. That proclamation I have now openly to publish and personally to deliver to you. With your outward ears you may have heard it hundreds of times. It is old, yet always new. Whoever among you, knowing himself to be guilty, will come and put his trust in Jesus Christ, shall have his sins covered. “Can God do that?” Yes, He can. He alone can cover sin! Against Him the sin was committed. It is the offended person who must pardon the offender. No one else can. He is the King. He has the right to pardon. He is the Sovereign Lord and He can blot out sin. Besides that, He can lawfully cover it, for the Lord Jesus Christ (though you know the story, let me tell it again—the song of Redemption always rings out a charming melody), Jesus Christ, the Father’s dear Son, in order that the Justice of God might be vindicated, bare His breast to its dreadful hurt and suffered in our place—what we ought to have suffered as the penalty of our sin! Now the Sacrifice of God covers sin—covers it right over and He more than covers it—He makes it cease to be! Moreover, the Lord Jesus kept the Law of God, and His obedience stands, instead of our obedience! And God accepts Him and His righteousness on our behalf, imputing His merits to our souls! Oh, the virtue of that atoning blood! Oh, the blessedness of that perfect righteousness of the Son of God, by which He covers our sins!  
There are two features of covering I should like to recall to your recollection. The one was the Mercy Seat or propitiatory, over the golden Ark, wherein were the tablets of stone. Those tablets of stone seemed, as it were, to reflect the sins of Israel. As in a mirror they reflected the transgression of God’s people. God was above, as it were, looking down between the cherubic wings. Was He to look down upon the Law of God defied and defiled by Israel? Ah, no—there was put over the top of the ark, as a lid which covered it all, a golden lid called the Mercy Seat—and when the Lord looked down He looked upon that lid which covered sin. Beloved, such is Jesus Christ, the Covering for all our sins! God sees no sin in those who are hidden beneath Jesus Christ!  
There was another covering at the Red Sea. On that joyous day when the Egyptians went down into the midst of the sea pursuing the Israelites, at the motion of Moses’ rod, the waters that stood upright like a wall leapt back into their natural bed and swallowed up the Egyptians! Great was the victory when Miriam sang, “The depths have covered them. There is not one of them left.” It is even so that Jesus Christ’s Atonement has covered up our sins. They are sunk in His sepulcher! They are buried in His tomb! His blood, like the Red Sea, has drowned them. “The depths have covered them. There is not one of them left.” Against the Believer there is not a sin recorded in God’s Book. He that believes in Him is perfectly absolved. “You have covered all their sin.” I shall not have time to dwell upon the sweetness of this fact, but I invite you that believe to consider its preciousness—and I hope you who have not believed will feel your mouth watering after it—to know that every sin one has ever committed, known and unknown, is gone—covered by Christ! To be assured that when Jesus died, He did not die for some of our sins, but for all the sins of His people! Not for their sins up till now, but for all the sins they ever will commit! Well does Kent put it—

*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black they’re cast  
And O, my Soul, with wonder view  
For sins to come, here’s pardon too!”*  
The Atonement was made before the sin was committed. The Righteousness was presented even before we had lived. “You have covered all their sins.” It seems to me as if the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world, had in the purpose of God, from the foundation of the world, covered all His people’s sins. Therefore, we are accepted in the Beloved, and dear to the Father’s heart. Oh, what a joy it is to get a hold of something like this Truth of God, especially when the Truth gets a hold of you—when you can feel by the inworked power and witness of the Holy Spirit that your sins are covered—that you dare stand up before a heart-searching God and give thanks that every transgression you ever committed is hid from the view of those piercing eyes through Jesus Christ your Lord!  
Some people think we ought not to talk thus, that it is presumptuous. But really there is more presumption in doubting than there is in believing! For a child to believe his father’s word is never presumption. I like to credit my Father’s Word, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Condemned I am not, for I know I do believe in Him. “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”  
Beloved, the covering is as broad as the sin! The covering completely covers, and forever covers, for as God sees today no sin in those who are washed in Jesus’ blood, so will He never see any. You are accepted with an acceptance that nothing can change! Whom once He loves, He never leaves, but loves them to the end. The reason of His love to them does not lie in their merits nor their charms—the cause of love is in Himself. The ground of His acceptance of them is in the Person and work of Christ. Whatever they may be, whatever their condition of heart may be, they are accepted because Christ lived and died. It is not a precarious or a conditional, but an eternal acceptance!  
Would you enjoy the blessedness of this complete covering? Cowering down beneath the tempest of Jehovah’s wrath, which you feel in your conscience, would you obtain this full remission? Behold the gates of the City of Refuge which stand wide open! The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the thirsty, needy, laboring, weary soul! Not merely open are the gates, but the invitation to enter is given. “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” You are bid to lay hold upon Eternal Life! The way of doing so is simple. No works of yours, no merits, no tears, no preparations are required, but trust— TRUST—that is all! Believe in Jesus! Rely upon Him! Depend upon Him! Depend upon Him! I have heard of Homer’s Iliad being enclosed in a nutshell, so small was it written, but here is the Plain Man’s Guide to Heaven in a nutshell! Here is the essence of the whole Gospel in one short sentence—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Trust Him! Trust Him! That is the meaning of that word, believe. Depend upon Him and as surely as you do it, death, nor Hell, nor sin shall ever separate you from the love of Him whom you have embraced, from the protection of Him in whose power you have taken shelter!  
The Lord lead you to cower beneath His covering wings and grant you to be found in Christ, accepted in the Beloved. So shall your present peace be the foretaste of your eternal happiness! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 55:1-17.**

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David. It needed the chief musician to sing such a Psalm as this! It is full of sorrow and yet full of confidence in God. It is a Psalm upon the stringed instruments, and it sings not of man, only, but of that Son of Man—that greatest of men, who was also greatest in grief as greatest in faith. Maschil—that is, “instructive,” “full of teaching.” The experience of one child of God is instructive to another, and especially the experience of the great First-Born among many brethren. A Psalm of David—David, that many-sided man who seemed not one, but “all mankind’s epitome.” Who has not found his own experience when he has read the Psalms of David? It is a mirror—this Book of Psalms—which reflects us all. See how he begins.

Verse 1. Give ear to my prayer, O God. All the saints pray. There is no exception to this rule. And in their times of trouble, they pray with greater vehemence than ever. They delight in prayer. But observe how eager they are that God should hear them. It is not praying for praying’s sake— for the use of good words only. “Give ear to my prayer, O God.”

1. And hide not Yourself from my supplication. When a man passes by his fellow in his distress, he is said to hide himself. O God, do not pass me by! When You hear my plaintive voice, do not hurry on and leave me to my woes! Forget not, Beloved, that our Lord Jesus Christ did suffer the hiding of God’s face. You and I may trust that in our hour of prayer we shall not have to do so. “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” But even if we should have to drink of that cup, better lips than ours have tasted its bitterness long ago!

2. Attend unto me, and hear me. That is three times he thus implores God to give him a hearing. It reminds me of that Gethsemane pleading of our Lord when thrice He prayed using the same words. Here David begins—makes his beginning in prayer with a threefold cry to God. “Give ear to me! Hide not Yourself from me! Attend unto my prayer, and hear me.”

2. I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. Sometimes prayer is scarcely articulate. “I make a noise.” He was very free with God. He spoke out his heart as best his heart would speak—and he seemed to ramble. I believe that some of our sweetly-composed prayers have no prayer in them—and some of our broken petitions are those that reach the heart of God. “Groans that cannot be uttered” are prayers that cannot be refused! There may be most strength in the passion of the soul when there is least order in the expression of the soul. “I mourn in my complaints, and make a noise.”

3. Because of the voice of the enemy. He can speak, and speak clearly, too. Malice is never short of language, “because of the voice of the enemy.”

3. Because of the oppression of the wicked. The best men have often been the most oppressed of men. Men have often spoken worst of those who have deserved the best. David is in that plight—and so was our Lord. He, too, knew the voice of the enemy and the oppression of the wicked.

3. For they cast iniquity upon me. They spatter me with their mire— they slander me. They speak evil of my good.  
3. And in wrath they hate me. It is the old story. The seed of the serpent naturally hates the Seed of the women. Even our Lord had a bruised heel. Know you not that Ishmael persecutes Isaac, the child of the promise? All down history there runs this line—the mark of blood and suffering. It must be so, “for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.”  
4. My heart is sorely pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. I suppose that David may have written this after he had been driven out of Jerusalem by the party under the leadership of his son, Absalom, and Ahithophel. When it is all over, he sings his song of dolor, and yet of confidence before his God. You know that our Lord Jesus Christ could use this language with very great emphasis. “My heart is sorely pained within Me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon Me”—as if midnight came down upon His soul—came down from God. “Are fallen upon me.” Descended, therefore, and those are the heaviest of griefs which seem to come down just when we expected that showers of mercy would come down. Our Savior knew what this meant.

5, 6. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest. If he could not have the wings of an eagle to fight the conflict, he begged for the wings of a dove to fly from it! But what would you and I do if we had wings? Where could we go if we had wings, but, like the dove of Noah, fly to the Lord? But we can get there without wings, Brothers and Sisters! We can get there by faith in Him. It is a vain wish, then, and yet how many have sighed—‘‘Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness, some boundless contiguity of shade where rumor of oppression and deceit might never reach me.” Ah, we sigh for solitude, and when we get solitude—we sigh to get out of it!

7. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. Why, David had been in the wilderness and then he sighed to get back to the Temple of God! But such foolish creatures are we at our very wisest that we know not what we sigh for! It was good for David that he had not wings, and it is good for you that you cannot run away. God has made you no armor for your back because you must go forward. Long ago He burned our boats. We cannot return. We must go “forward,” now, to the eternal victories in His strength!

8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. But he that would fly away from slander must fly very fast. How can we escape it? That cruel tongue, that wicked tongue walks through the earth and smites with its sword the best of God’s people. Now, like a soldier, David prays as his Master would never pray.

9. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. That was not a bad prayer, for God heard it. He did divide their tongues. The counsels of the wicked were put to nothing, and so they made a mistake and David escaped through their divisions. I see not how a king driven from his throne and hunted by rebels, can pray differently from this. If he is a warrior and fights at all, he must wish for victory! Yet let me remind you that these verses need not be read in the imperative, neither may they necessarily be understood to be prayers. They can be read as prophecies. “God will destroy and divide the tongues of the wicked.” The divisions of error are the hope of truth. God divides the tongues of those who use their tongues against His Word, and so His Truth conquers.

10. Day and night they go about upon the walls thereof: mischief, also, and sorrow are in the midst of it. Remember, Jerusalem was in the hands of a band of wicked men. Everywhere sin prevailed when David had left it.

11, 12. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets. For it was not an enemy that reproached me—then I could have borne it. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. Here you get to the center of David’s grief. Ahithophel had betrayed him and here you begin to see the portrait of Christ coming out on the canvas. David seems to be painted first, and then there is painted an image of our Lord, which is seen here and there. “It was not an enemy; then I could have borne it.”

13. But it was you. In the original it runs thus, “But you.” The ardor of poetry is upon the Psalmist. He sees him—“you.” And he looks at him with indignation—“you.”

13, 14. A man my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in company. It is Ahithophel! It is Judas Iscariot! It is either—it is both. Oh, what a grief it is to be betrayed by one whom we have trusted, one whom we treated as our equal, one whom we followed as a trusted guide, one to whom we told our secrets and linked our heart. “My acquaintance.” One whose friendship was sanctified by the sanctions of religion. “We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the House of God in company.” Have any of you had to suffer from this serpent’s tongue? Be not surprised. Your Master endured it before you. And now David bursts out in words of prayer, “Let death seize upon them. Let them go down quickly into Hell.”

15. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quickly into Hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. And this prayer also was heard, for Ahithophel was hanged with a rope, and Absalom without one—and their followers perished by thousands in the woods of Ephraim—and so God swept away the good man’s slanderers.

16. As for me—What would I do? Plot against their plots and set cunning against their cunning? No, not I.  
16, 17. I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice. He would pray often, but not too often. Where time sets her boundaries, there are we to set up our altars—evening and morning and at noon. It seems natural that our undertakings should be begun, continued, and ended in God—and that each day. Oh, pray much when your enemies plot much! If, morning, noon, and evening, they are seeking your ill, then just as often seek you good from God. How beautifully he puts it. “He shall hear my voice.” He does not pray at a chance. He is certain that his prayers will go up to God. Yes, more than that, he anticipates a blessing! He foresees, no, he sees the blessing!

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2426 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PRAYER FOR REVIVAL  
NO. 2426

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, AUGUST 18, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 14, 1887.

**“Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You” Psalm 85:6.**

BRETHREN, if you will pray this prayer, it will be better than my preaching from it! And my only motive in preaching from it is that you may pray it. Oh, that at once, before I have uttered more than a few sentences, we might begin to pray by crying, yes, groaning deep down in our souls,” Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?”

Notice the style of the praying here—it is in the form of a question and in the shape of a plea. There are very few words and none that can be spared. Godly men, when they prayed of old, meant it! They did not pray for form’s sake, neither were they very particular about uttering goodly words and fine-sounding sentences—they came to close grips with God. They questioned Him, they pleaded with Him. They drove home the nail and tried to clinch it. I see that in the very shape of the prayer, “Will You not—will You not—will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?” Oh, that we knew how to pray! I fear that we do not. We are missing the sacred art, we are losing the heavenly mystery—we are but apprentice hands in prayer. Compared with such a man as John Knox, whose prayers were worth more than an army of ten thousand men, or compared with the prayers of Luther, how few of us can pray!

Luther was a man of whom they said, as they pointed at him in the street, “There goes a man who can have anything he likes to ask of God.” He was the man who, by his prayer, dragged Melancthon back from the very gates of death and, what was more, the man who could shake upon her seven hills the harlot of Rome as she never had been shaken before, because he was mighty with God in prayer! Oh, that I could but stir up my Brothers and Sisters to be instant in season and out of season, if there is such a thing as out of season with God in prayer! Let us get away to our closets! Let us cry mightily to Him! Let us come to close quarters with Him and say, “Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?

I. To come at once to the text, let us ask, WHAT IS THE TIME FOR SUCH A PRAYER AS THIS?  
We shall have to look at the Psalm, itself, to help us in the answer. What is the time for offering such a prayer as this? It is, dear Friends, when we can remember some gracious acts of God in the past. Read— “Lord, You have been favorable unto Your land. You have brought back the captivity of Jacob...Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?” Ah, now, some of you can remember grand times, when you were younger than you now are, when the Lord was present with His people in a very glorious fashion—when He laid bare His arm and the people were made to feel His Divine Presence in the preaching of the Word. Do you remember it? The 44th Psalm begins, “We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work You did in their days, in the times of old.” None of us can remember the early Methodist days—they were over before we were born—but they were very wonderful times when the preaching of the Word of God was like fire in the midst of the people!  
[Our friends need not be troubled by the flying of a dove. It will soon go out of the window, no doubt. Let us believe that it has come as a messenger of good. Oh, that the blessed Dove would, Himself, come from Heaven and bring salvation in His wings!]  
Well, I was saying that those first Methodist times were brave days, so our fathers have told us, though we cannot remember them. But some of you can remember when you were members of a happy congregation, all united, all earnest, all pleading with God and there were grand Sabbaths, then! You can never forget those days of the Son of Man upon the earth, when conversions were numerous and all the people of God rejoiced and were ready to shout for joy. If you have any recollection of such days as those, pray this prayer, “Lord, what You have done, You can do! Will You not revive us again? You can outdo all we have yet seen of Your work. Come, now, we beseech You, and repeat Your mercies in the eyes of Your people.”  
After some mercy drops, then, it becomes us to cry for showers of blessing. Pray again the petition that we sang just now—

*“Revive Your work, O Lord,  
And give refreshing showers,  
The glory shall be all Your own,  
The blessing, Lord, be ours.”*

Another time for such a prayer is after tokens of Divine displeasure, when we are somewhat under a cloud. Thus the Psalmist says, “Will You be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?” I feel that the Church of God is generally, at this time, in a very sad state and though I am told that I am a croaker, and too nervous, and so on, yet I know what I know, and I speak not without clear information nor without a heart that is heavy at knowing so much of the evil of the times! And, because the times are dark and God’s Gospel is at a discount, and prayerfulness of spirit and holiness of life are things not so common among us as they should be, therefore I think that it is time to cry to the Lord, “Will You not revive us again?” I entreat God’s people to pray, now, if they have ever prayed in their lives! This is a dark hour of the night— now cry mightily unto the Lord, the God of our salvation—that He will turn our captivity and send the daystar which shall herald that day that shall never know a night! It is good to pray when you have seen good days and it is equally right to pray when you think that the days are not what they should be.

Another time for praying like this is when saints feel lethargic. Do you always feel active? Do you always feel energetic? I think not! If you were to look at one of the statues, say, in Westminster Abbey, you would find that it never complains of rheumatism and is not affected either by heat or cold, because it is not alive. But living men and living women have their changes because they have life. The most flourishing tree that grows sheds its leaves when the time comes. All plants are not always in flower—they have their springs, their summers, their autumns and their winters—and it is just so with God’s people. Whenever you, therefore, feel dull and lethargic, here is a prayer for you—“Will You not revive us again? Lord, come and wake us up again! Pour fresh strength into Your weak children! Put the living fire into Your lukewarm children! Raise Your sleepy children, Lord—make us all to live at the highest point of life if, for a while, we have seemed ready to die.” Perhaps someone will say, “Then it is the prayer for me, for I feel dull and weak.” If so, be sure that you use it. Do not acknowledge the suitability of it and then put it up on the shelf, but pray to the Lord at once, “Will you not revive us again?”

Another time when this prayer is very suitable is when efforts seem to be useless—when, for instance, I have preached the Gospel and have had no conversions. When you have been in your Sunday school class and no child has cried to God for mercy. When you have been up and down your tract district and not one person has said a cheering word as to taking interest in the sermon that you have left. When, indeed, you have come to close quarters with some hearts and have really laid yourselves out for the conversion of such and such persons—and you appear to have failed. Well now, if that has been your experience, do not go home miserable, but go to God with this prayer, “Lord, will You not revive us again?” How quickly the Lord can revive us! Here, by the space of 33 years or so, I have been favored by the Grace of God to preach to an attentive congregation, but there have been times when I have felt that there was—

“*No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,”*

when I have preached, but it seemed to be like talking to a dead wall! And yet, before I have been aware of it, God’s Spirit has come down upon the people and the same blessed Gospel—for we have not two gospels— has been blessed to many and, one after another, they have cried out, “What must we do to be saved?” Workers for Christ, never think of giving up your work, but stick to it and pray this prayer vehemently, and intensely, “Will You not revive us again? Lord, send us once again times of increased spiritual life, times of greater success in the winning of souls!”

And, once more, I think that this prayer may well be prayed when we have among us a number of persons who are backsliding. In a large Church there are always some who are spiritually sick—going back and declining—and some of us know the heartbreak of mourning over those that once ran well, of whom we have sorrowfully to ask, “What hindered them?” There are some who used to be bold in the service of God who now forsakes His House of Prayer, His way and even deny His holy name! Well, what then?—

*“When any turn from Zion’s way,*

*Alas, what numbers do!”*  
Then let this prayer be in our heart and on our tongue, “Will You not revive us again? Great Shepherd, come and bring back the stray sheep. Holy Spirit, come, we beseech You, with Your quickening breath, and bring back to life and spiritual health those that are fainting and ready to die.”

Thus I think I have shown you that there are many occasions upon which this prayer would be a very fit one. Let us now silently, all of us who know how to pray, breathe this petition into God’s ear, “Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?”

II. Secondly, though it will be the same thought presented a little differently, let us consider THE NEED OF SUCH A PRAYER—“Will You not revive us again?” Who needs such a prayer?

Who needs it? Well, first of all, the minister needs it. Brothers and Sisters, you make a mistake about some of us ministers—you have a notion that we are always full of Grace, that when we come into the pulpit we are always able to command earnestness and zeal. Do not believe it! We are but poor creatures without our God. Apart from Divine Grace, we are just as hard-hearted towards sinners as any of our people are, and we have to cry mightily to God to keep our spiritual nature alive, even as you do. I entreat you, pray more for us! Pray that God would revive us again! If the preachers grow dull and sleepy, there is no wonder that the people do! Therefore give us a special place in your supplications that we may be kept right for your sakes, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s sake. Oh, pray for ministers! I am not going to find fault with any of them any more than I find fault with myself, but there is grievous need to pray for many occupants of pulpits, that the Lord would revive them again!

There is a very common habit of criticizing us and I am sure I do not mind if you criticize me as much as you like, but it is very difficult for me to find anybody to take this pulpit because anybody that some of you like, others do not like. I have given up any idea of pleasing you all—but I just try to do my best, that is all I can do. But the habit of criticizing ministers is a bad one. Give it up and begin to pray for them. Pray more and more for all preachers of the Word, “Lord, revive them. Lord, revive them.” I have heard of a minister who preached once about our being epistles, written not with ink, but with the Holy Spirit. One of his divisions was that sometimes ministers were pens and they could not write upon men’s hearts because they were not dipped in the ink. I think that there is a great deal in that thought. If a minister comes forward with a good dip of ink in his pen, then he can write upon men’s hearts. When the Spirit of God fills us and we are revived, then some good writing will be done—but not else.

But, dear Friends, all the leaders of our Church need receiving. Of our Church, I mean. If there are any people who need praying for, it is deacons, and I put the elders with them. Never forget to pray for them. I have no fault to find with them any more than I have to find with the ministers, but they are no better than they should be, and they will not be as good as they should be unless the Grace of God shall come upon them and bless them! Oh, to have around us a loving band of Church officers! It is our great joy and delight to have such men around us, but may the Lord make better men of them, equip them all for their spiritual work to the very highest degree and fill them all with Divine Life!

I was preaching, once, in a place which happened to be full when I preached there, but the congregation was very small at other times. And when I went into the vestry, I noticed two gentlemen leaning against the mantelpiece in a very comfortable manner, and I asked them if they were the deacons of the Church. They said that they were, and I then told them that I had looked, for some time, to find out the reason why that Church did not prosper, and I had found it out! They were anxious to know what it was, but I did not further inform them. I have no doubt that, often, dead deacons and dead elders prevent a Church prospering— therefore, let us pray earnestly for the leaders of God’s Israel, “Lord, revive them again. Put more spiritual life into them.”

The same is true of all the members of the Church without exception. How much they need reviving! And all the workers, too. You who have a large class to look after. You who are conducting a Mission. Why, if you who lead the way in Christ’s work go to sleep, what is to become of the work? So, let us carry upon our hearts in prayer all our fellow members, the workers and the sufferers, and cry to God, “Lord, revive them. Keep them in a good state. Keep them in proper trim that they may do that work in noble fashion, and bring glory to Your holy name. Will You not revive us again?” Brothers, Sisters, let me breathe this prayer in the name of you all, “Lord, we want to serve You at our very best. Revive us again, we beseech You.”

But, further, we must pray thus, for there is great need on the part of the hesitators. Some of you who are here, tonight, seemed about to be converted years ago! I know a man whom, to this day, you cannot get into a place of worship. He says he will never go any more. He declares that he was within an inch of being converted when he went last time and he is afraid to go again! But there are some of you who always come and you have almost learned to sit contentedly upon the brink of decision. Oh, pray for them, dear Friends! Pray for the hesitators, pray for the procrastinators, pray for those who are trifling away their conscience, gradually getting rid of everything like spiritual fear and distress—and who will shut their eyes and sleep themselves into Hell unless God, in great mercy, prevents it! O Lord, will You not revive us again—that these sleepers may wake up and become decided for You?

Besides, we have need to pray this prayer when we think of the careless ones among us. What strange people come into such a congregation as this! A man came here this morning for no earthly purpose but to pick pockets—and I dare say he is here again tonight! Look sharp after him! I wish I knew how to pick my way into his heart and to run away with him as a captive for my Lord! Oh, that even he might be transformed by Divine Grace! The most curious motives bring people under the sound of the Gospel—some of them positively wicked, others of them quite ridiculous.

Then look at the outside public, the myriads who never go to hear the Gospel at all. How are they to be reached by a cold, dead Church? So, for their sakes, for the sake of this great London, for the sake of this great nation, for the sake of the world, let us pray, “O God, be pleased to revive us again!”

I pause here and beseech you not to let me pass the next milestone until each one of you have prayed this prayer, “Will You not revive us again?”

III. Now, thirdly, and very briefly, THE ESSENCE OF SUCH A PRAYER—“Will You not revive us again?” What is this prayer if it is analyzed and we get to the very soul of it?

Well, it means, first, dependence upon God. If you are praying this prayer aright, you feel, “Lord, nobody can revive us but Yourself.” People often talk about “getting up a revival.” Is not that a wicked thing? “Will You not revive us, O Lord?” The machinery for getting up a revival may often be the greatest hindrance to true godliness! A Church cannot be revived unless God revives it! Not a soul is saved, not a saint is quickened and made to grow except by the work of God. That is what this prayer means, “Lord, put Your hand to the work. Put Your right hand to it, we beseech You. We depend alone upon You. Will You not revive us again?”

The essence of this prayer is, next, confidence in God. “Lord, You can revive us again. We are not so deep in the mire but that You can lift us out. We are not so dead but that You can make us alive. Will You not revive us again? It is impossible to us, but it is possible to You. Lord, one touch of Your hand, a breath from Your blessed lips, and it is done. Will You not revive us again?” Brothers, Sisters, we believe in God, do we not? And if we do, we believe that whatever state a Church is in, God can bring it out of it! Do not run away from it and say, “God can never bless it.” He can bless it! Pray it up into a blessing and make this the essence of your prayer, “Lord, You can revive us. We believe it, and we look for it.”

The essence of this prayer is, next, importunity with God. “Will You not revive us again?” It is earnest pleading, it is pushing the point home, it is urging it with God. Do this, I pray you, dear Brothers and Sisters, with regard to the state of the Church at the present time. If half a dozen of you would, tonight, or as soon as possible, shut yourselves up a while and begin to cry to God for a revival of religion—and if you continued to cry more and more until it came—there would be grand hopes for the end of this century. If we could get a band of men and women who would give God no rest until He made His Jerusalem a praise in the earth, we should see, between now and the 20th century, something that would make our very eyes sparkle, and our hearts dance for joy! It needs but that we wrestle with the Angel of the Covenant and we may have what we will. We may be in a bad case, but we are not worse off than the churches were a hundred years ago, yet God heard the prayers of mourners in Zion who in secret places cried to Him—and He will hear our prayers, too! Therefore, let us make a solemn league and covenant together, and let us in union and concert of prayer wait upon the Lord and hear what He shall speak, for He will yet speak peace unto His people if we do but know how to ask for it. I leave with you who are the King’s remembrancers this sweet prayer to be prayed night and day— “Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?”

IV. Now I finish with this last head—THE NET RESULT IF THIS PRAYER IS ANSWERED. “Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?”

It seems rather singular—does it not—that the Psalmist should put as the reason for a revival that God’s people should rejoice in Him? You and I do not always estimate things aright. Preaching is only the stalk— conversion, prayer, praise—these are the full corn in the golden ear! In the garden the leaves may represent the work that is done, but the flowers are the praise that is rendered. In a revival, part of the result is the conversion of men, but the result is the praise of God—and that revival brings forth most fruit that gives to God the most Glory! God is most glorified when His people rejoice in Him and, therefore, the ripest fruit, the innermost core and center of that which comes of all holy service, is the joy in God which is as worship to Him. I reckon that we have served God when we have fed the poor, when we have taught the ignorant, when we have reclaimed the wanderer, but I am equally sure that we have rendered acceptable sacrifice when we have prayed to God, when we have delighted ourselves in Him, when the joy of our heart has, in silence, exhaled towards Him!

So, therefore, if God will be pleased to send a revival, His people will rejoice in Him because they are revived. They will be thankful that their spirits are plucked away from their languor and lethargy and then they will begin to rejoice with the joy of gratitude because God has done such great things for them! And then sinners will be converted and straightway saints will rejoice over sinners saved. They will say—

*“Ring the bells of Heaven! There is joy today, For a soul returning from the wild”*  
and they will give God the Glory of that soul’s salvation. So, in that way,

His people will rejoice in Him.

But, best of all, to come back to where I started, when everything is right in the Church and there is a happy and prosperous time, then God’s people will silently and inwardly render unto Him a revenue of praise by rejoicing in Him. It must be a good thing—must it not—for you in the midst of the turmoil of business, or for me in the midst of controversy, just to forget it all, to shake it all off and say, “Oh, what a God I have! Blessed be His name”? I often revel in God my exceeding joy—I seem to just give myself up to the enjoyment of a holy festival of delight in God, feasting my heart to the fullest. And what are the dainties that are spread before us at such a feast?

Well, first, I rejoice that there is a God. What a horrible world this would be to live in without God—the house all furnished and nobody at home! But my Lord is always at home and God is better than His world, beautiful as are the avenues of trees and yonder glistening river! God is always at home—that is the joy of our life. I love to see my Father’s flag on the top of the castle and to feel that He is at home. His Presence makes everything so bright.

And then what a joy it is to think that He is my God! Whatever I have, or have not, it does not matter, I have a God, and all that there is in God is mine! O my Soul, what a happy, happy being you are! Blessed be God forever for making me, seeing that He has made Himself to be mine! We praise Him, first, for our being, and then for our well-being—and the essence of our well-being is that God, the greatest of all Beings, is ours forever and ever! This God is our God forever and ever! He will be our Guide even unto death and each one of us who is truly His can sing—

*“Yes, my own God is He.”*

As I think of God, I meditate on all His attributes. He is a powerful God. Oh, how I love Him for that! I do not want to have a weak arm to lean upon—let my Lord be the mighty God! Hallelujah to Him because He can do all things and all that power will be used for righteousness and truth! I love to think of Him as the God of Love, nothing, even in His Justice, being contrary to love. Oh, what a blessed God I have—a God of Love! Then I think of Him as a God of Justice, and I am equally pleased with Him. I do not want an unjust God—a God who could pardon sin without Atonement is no God for me! I delight to feel that His justice is as much concerned and bound to save me as His mercy. Oh, what a joy to be able to rejoice in His Justice! And then to rejoice in His Truth—His faithfulness, that He cannot lie—His immutability, that He cannot change—His eternal existence, that He cannot faint or die—ah, my Brothers and Sisters, I shall not attempt to go over all the qualities of the Infinite Jehovah but whatever they are, we delight in them all, and yet we rejoice in Him most of all!

There are many causes for joy to a Christian, but the great wellhead is God Himself. I can rejoice in His people, but then they have their faults. I can rejoice in His Word, but then I sometimes tremble at that Word. I can rejoice in God’s works, but then there is a certain terror even about them. But as for God, He Himself is perfect! And whether He is dressed in robes of war, or comes to me with words of peace, now that I am reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, He is altogether delightful under any aspect and in any place!

It may seem a very little thing for us thus to delight in God, but it is the greatest thing of all! It is the crown of a revival that God’s people should rejoice in Him.

Now, dear Hearts, as you come to the Communion Table, I want you to try to rejoice in God. “But I am mourning about myself,” says one. Well, mourn about yourself if you like, but rejoice in God. “Oh, but I am troubled in my circumstances!” Well, but a child of God should rise above circumstances and rejoice in God. There is more in God to cheer you than in your circumstances to depress you! Say to all these things, “Good-bye! Good-bye! Go home, for tonight I am just going to rejoice in God to the fullest!” God help you to do so and if you do, I shall know that the revival has come, and we shall look to see other fruits of it, seeing that this best and sweetest fruit of all is already reached!

Let us, before I dismiss those of you who will be going away, pray this prayer together—

“Lord, revive us again. Lord, revive me. We would, each one of us, say, ‘Amen’ to that petition. Lord, revive the pastor. Lord, revive the Church officers. Lord, revive the workers. Lord, revive the members of the Church. Lord, revive the backsliders. Lord, revive those who seem to live, but have grown careless. Lord, revive the Church at large throughout the whole earth. Spirit of revival, come upon us, now, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.”

And may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit, be with us evermore! Amen.  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 43:22-28; 44:1-8; PSALM 85.**

We will read two passages of Scripture this evening, both of which will have a bearing upon the subject we are afterwards to consider from our text. Let us first read a few verses from Isaiah’s prophecy, beginning at chapter 43:22. [The publishers chose to put the exposition after the sermon, but Brother Spurgeon always did the exposition first.—EO]

Isaiah 43:22. But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of Me, O Israel. This was a sad charge for God to bring against His chosen people. They had grown weary of their God and yet, truly, this charge may well be brought against some of us, for we have grown weary of God, we have forgotten Him in our daily walk and conversation—and have grown cold in our love towards Him.

23. You have not brought Me the small cattle of your burnt offerings; neither have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense. No, God’s ways are not ways of irksomeness, but ways of pleasantness! Our religion is no tax upon us. We find Christ’s yoke to be very easy and His burden to be very light. All wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. “I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense.”

24. You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices but you have made Me to serve with your sins. You have wearied Me with your iniquities. “While your services have been neglected, your sins have been pampered.” What an accusation! As God says by the Prophet Amos, “I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.” God seems to be oppressed with the sin of His people, but what comes next? Why, one of the very sweetest verses in the whole of the Scriptures!

25. I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins. O glorious mercy! We are sunk in the depth of sin and yet God pardons us on the spot! He at once puts every sin away and bids us go in peace.

26-28. Put Me in remembrance: let us plead together, declare you, that you may be justified. Your first father has sinned, and your teachers have transgressed against Me. Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

Isaiah 44:1. Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen. After all these charges, you see, the love of God to His chosen people is still the same! Well might Paul say, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Sin is an exceedingly evil and bitter thing, but even that shall not divide us from the love of God, for, “while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” So herein Grace triumphs over sin and lays our follies beneath its feet!

2-8. Thus says the LORD that made you, and formed you from the womb which will help you; Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My spirit upon your seed, and My blessing is on your offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD’S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Thus says the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts, I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God. And who, as I shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. Fear you not, neither be afraid: have not I told you from that time, and have declared it? You are even My witnesses. Is there a God beside Me? Yes, there is no God; I know not any.

Now turn to Psalm 85. This Psalm is dedicated to the chief musician. It is a Psalm worthy of the ablest musician. It is to be sung with care. They are well instructed who can understand it, and enter into the experience it describes. It is called—

*“A Psalm for the sons of Korah.”*

I have often reminded you, dear Friends, that when Korah, Dathan and Abiram went down alive into the pit, the sons of Dathan and Abiram perished with their fathers, but we read, “Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.” We cannot tell why. We must set it down to the Sovereign Grace of God. And if it were so, then I can see why they became singers in the sanctuary!

“A Psalm for the sons of Korah.” You will sing best who wonder most at your salvation! You who can see no reason for it, except the Sovereign goodness of God, will have sweet voices tuned with gratitude wherewith to praise God. The first verse of the Psalm contains a happy memory

Verses 1, 2. LORD, You have been favorable unto Your land: You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people, You have covered all their sin. Selah. Let us think of what God has done for His people. He has been very favorable to us in years past. He has lifted up the light of His Countenance upon His chosen ones and made them glad. “You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.” We were once in captivity, exiles far off from God and home, but He has led our captivity captive, and we are now in bondage no longer, blessed be His name! Note again what the Psalmist says—“You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people.” What a joy that is! Forgiven sin is enough to make us sing to all eternity. If sin is pardoned, you have a mass of mercy in that fact too great for you to estimate its value. “You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people.” See how the Inspired writer puts it again—“You have covered all their sin—hidden it, put it out of sight with that Divine covering of the Atonement which has hid forever, even from the eyes of God, the sin of His people! There is a happy memory for us—to see what God has done for us. Let us bless His name for it. Now comes another happy memory

3. You have taken away all Your wrath: You have turned Yourself from the fierceness of Your anger. “You did stay Your bow even after it was bent. Even when Your right arm was bared for war, You did make peace for us. ‘You have turned yourself from the fierceness of Your anger.’ When it burned like fire, yet did You stay it through the great Atonement of Jesus, “Christ our Lord.” Now comes in a prayer

4. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease. “You have done all this for Your people; now do this for us who fear lest we are not Your people—comfort us! Turn us and then take Your anger from our conscience, and let us be at peace with You.” How I wish that many in this Tabernacle would pray even now, “Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease!” It is the prayer of a Church that is under a cloud. It is the prayer of a nation that is suffering for its sin. It is the prayer of a sinner who sees what God has done for His people and who entreats the Lord to do the same for him.

5. Will You be angry with us forever? “Surely we have not got into eternity yet. Lord, do not have eternal anger toward us. ‘Will You be angry with us forever?’ Will You not hear our prayers? Will You not have mercy upon us?”

5. Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? “Shall our children also suffer? Will You not have pity upon them?”  
6, 7. Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation. “We are such poor blind creatures that we cannot see! Yet, O Lord, show us Your mercy, make us see it, reveal it to us and grant us Your salvation! It must be a free grant, a grant of Grace, a grant of Love, therefore, grant us Your salvation.” Listen to this eighth verse  
8. I will hear what God the LORD will speak. “I will be silent. I have spoken to Him, now I will hear what His answer is. I will hold my ears attentive to listen to His voice.” O my dear Hearers, when you are willing to hear God, there are good times coming for you!  
8. For He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints. There is peace, peace, nothing else but peace for them!  
8. But let them not turn again to folly. For if they do, the Lord will speak to them by rods and chastisements. They that get God’s peace must mind that they keep it. They must walk carefully, or else they will break the peace and they may, themselves, get broken in pieces. “Let them not turn again to folly.”

9. Surely His salvation is near them that fear Him. When you honor Him, reverence Him, worship Him—His salvation cannot be far away from you.

9, 10. That glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together. At the Cross is their meeting place! There, you shall see God’s mercy and God’s truth embracing each other over the great Sacrifice of Christ. Mercy and truth seem set at variance in the sinner’s case till they are reconciled by the blood of Jesus!

10. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. It seemed impossible that God should be righteous and yet be at peace with sinners, but Christ has taken both parties by the hand and, at Calvary, they kiss each other! God is as righteous as if He were not gracious, and as gracious as if He were not just! Yes, His justice and His peace are, each of them, all the brighter because of the other!

11. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from Heaven. Carpeted with truth and canopied with righteousness—what a wonderful scene is before us! Truth is coming out of the ground as though it had been a dead thing which begins to live, and leaves its tomb! And righteousness is throwing up the windows of Heaven and leaning out to look down upon the sons of men! “Truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness shall look down from Heaven.” What a wonderful meeting this is of truth and righteousness—truth lifting up her hands to Heaven and righteousness putting down its hands to earth!

12. Yes, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. It is all well when it is well with us in our relation to God. When we are reconciled to Him, then all things are reconciled by that fact.

3. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps. Lord, hear the prayer of this Psalm and answer it to us, for Jesus sake! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2112 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PEACE—HOW GAINED, HOW BROKEN  
NO. 2112

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly.” Psalm 85:8.**

“I WILL hear what God the Lord will speak.” There were voices and voices. There were voices of the past concerning God’s wondrous mercy to His people—“You have been favorable unto Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.” But mingled with these were the sad voices of the present. He heard the wailing and the pleading of those who said, “Will You be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations?” From this mingling of singing and sighing, the Psalmist turned away and cried, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak. I will get me into the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most High. I will hear that voice from between the cherubim which speaks peace to the soul.”

Beloved, herein is wisdom. Resort to the sanctuary of God. When you cannot find harmony in the voices of the street, or the voices of the Church, turn to the melody of that one voice which “will speak peace unto His people.”

Again, the Psalmist had been praying. At the Mercy Seat he had spread out this petition, “Will You not revive us again: that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, O Lord and grant us Your salvation.” When he had spoken, he desired an answer. He watched and waited till the Lord God should give him a reply. A friend, kindly wishing to spare me, puts at the end of his letter, “No answer expected.” This is too often a footnote to men’s prayers.

David did not pray in that fashion—he expected an answer from the mouth of the Lord. He said within himself, “I have spoken—but now I will speak no more but hear what God the Lord will speak.” Always follow up prayer with holy expectancy. Prayers which expect no answer are guilty of taking the name of God in vain. They are a misuse of the holy ordinance of supplication. And they are a question put upon the Divine existence, inasmuch as they reduce the Godhead to an idol, like to those images of the heathen which have ears but they hear not, neither do they speak.

Prayers without faith are an insult to the attributes of God and dishonor to His sacred name. If you pray aright, in the name of Jesus, expect the Lord to hear you, even as you would hear your child, if he asked bread of you.

In addition to this, it should be the daily resolve of every Christian man—“I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” Not only when I am dazed and confused with other voices. Nor only when I have expressed my heart in prayer—but at all times and seasons—I will hear what God the Lord shall speak. There are many doctrines and controversies. But “I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” His voice, by His Prophets and Apostles, shall be the umpire of every dispute with me. I will also turn to the Word of God for the rule of my daily life, as well as for the instruction of my mind in doctrine. I will have regard to the precepts as well as to the promises. “Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

When I would know my duty, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” And, hearing His Word of command, I will need neither whip nor spur, but will make haste in the way of His commands. I will listen to His Word, whatever I may do with the precepts of men. Has He spoken? Did the primeval darkness hear it? Shall not the light which He has given me be attentive to it? Even the dead shall hear that voice and they that hear shall live. Shall not I, who have been quickened by His Spirit, joyfully say, “I will never forget Your precepts: for with them You have quickened me”?

Our Savior speaks of some who enter into life halt and maimed and having one eye. But He does not speak of anybody entering into life without ears. We must hear the voice of God, for it is written, “Hear and your soul shall live.” Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. By Ear Gate the Prince Emmanuel enters the town of Mansoul. Men are saved, not by what they touch, or see, or taste, or smell—but by what they hear. Oh, that we would all hear the voice of Christ with solemn attention!

Our Lord says, “He that has ears to hear, let him hear.” Be this our resolve—“I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” Like young Samuel, let each one say, “Speak, Lord. For Your servant hears.”

There is one special reason given by the Psalmist why the people of God should be most willing and eager to hear what God the Lord shall speak, and that is because, “He will speak peace unto His people and to His saints.” You, Beloved, will hear nothing from the Lord but that which will calm your fears and cheer your hearts. The Lord speaks no thunders against you. His tones are tenderness, His Words are mercy, His Spirit is love, His message is peace. I will hear what God the Lord will speak—for He will speak peace and nothing else but peace, unto His own people. That is the subject for us to consider this morning. The Lord Jehovah gives peace to His holy ones.

First, what we know the Lord will speak. And, secondly, what we fear may hinder our enjoying the blessing which He speaks to us—“Let them not turn again to folly”—a notable word of warning, to which we shall do well to give heed.

I. First, let us consider WHAT WE KNOW THE LORD WILL SPEAK. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak. For He will speak peace.”

The first point is, He speaks peace to a certain company—“to His people, and to His saints.” Let us, then, ask ourselves, Has the Lord ever spoken peace to us, or will He do so? He will certainly do so if we have an ear to hear His voice. For God will not speak sweet words to those who turn to Him a deaf ear. He that will not hear the Gospel of peace, shall never know the peace of the Gospel. If you will not hear the Holy Spirit when He warns you of your sins, neither shall you hear Him revealing peace through pardon.

If you will not hear the Lord when He proposes to you reconciliation through the sacrifice of His dear Son. If you will not hear Him when He bids you repent and believe and be washed in the blood of the Lamb, then He will never speak peace to your soul. There is no peace out of Christ, who is our Peace. There is one Ambassador and one Mediator and only one. There is one atonement by blood and only one.

There is one Covenant of peace and there can never be another. Reconciliation comes to men by Jesus Christ and by no other gate. If you will not hear the Lord when He speaks concerning His dear Son, who is the Propitiation for sins, He will never speak peace to your heart. Oh, for the ear which is opened to hear the Lord, for this is the sure mark of Divine Grace! Does not Jesus say, “My sheep hear My voice”?

Those to whom the Lord speaks peace are His people and they acknowledge Him to be their God. Many men have no God. They would not like to be called atheists but it practically comes to that. God is not in their thoughts, their plans, their actions, their business, their life. But there is peace to that man to whom God is the greatest fact of his existence. Happy is he who has God first and last and midst in all that he does. Look him through and through and you will perceive that as the color tinges the stained glass, so does faith in God color all his life.

God is with him in his loneliness and among the multitude—God is above him to govern him, beneath him to uphold him—within him to quicken him. The man has a God to worship, a God to trust, a God to delight in. If God is everything to you, you are among His people and He will speak peace unto you. That peace is, however, always connected with holiness, for it is added, “and to His saints.” His people and His saints are the same persons. Those who have a God know Him to be a holy God, and therefore they strive to be holy themselves. He that has no saintship about him will have no peace about him.

If you live a blundering, careless, godless life, you will have much tossing to and fro and many questionings of heart. “There is no peace,” says my God, “unto the wicked.” But to His people, His saintly ones, His sanctified ones, the people who follow after righteousness—to these the Lord Himself will secure peace by His own word of mouth.

Do I hear anyone saying, “Alas, I could not venture to be classed with saints”? Listen one minute—these people, though they are now God’s people, and though they are now made saintly by His Grace—were once

given over to folly. How do I know this? Because the text says, “Let them not turn again to folly”—which shows that once they did follow after folly. Once they followed sin with all their hearts. They knew not God, neither served Him. But they have been turned away from folly, sin and shame—a change, a conversion has taken place in them, by the Grace of God.

Therefore, dear Hearer, let not your past foolishness dismay you, if you would now come to God. Fool as you may have been, the Lord is turning you from folly. And if He brings you to be numbered among His people and His holy ones, He will speak peace to you. I think I hear one say, “I have turned away from folly but I feel that there is in my heart a tendency to return to it!” I know it. I, too, have felt the old Adam pulling at my sleeve, to draw me back to the old way, if possible.

So it was with these people, or else the Lord would not have needed to say, “Let them not turn again to folly.” They were His people, they were His saints, too—and He spoke peace to them. But the old nature lurked within, and made the heart in danger of turning again to folly. If you find the old leaven working within you, fermenting unto evil and making you feel sick at heart to think that you should be so base, then bow low at your Savior’s feet and cry to Him in the language of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Yet remember, even if it is so with you, nevertheless you may be numbered with the Lord’s people, of whom He has said that He will speak peace unto them. But if you have no horror of sin. If you have no conflict with evil. If you have no longing for righteousness and no ear for the voice of the Lord, then God will not speak peace to you. But one of these days He will speak thunderbolts and accent His words with flames of fire—and this shall be the tenor of His speech—“Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” May you never hear that voice of wrath. But may peace be spoken into your soul.

But now, dear Friends, I notice here that the peace which is to be desired is peace which God speaks—and all other peace is evil. The question is sometimes put—“We see bad men enjoy peace and we see good men who have but little peace.” That is one of the mysteries of life. But it is not a very difficult one as to its first part. Why do bad men enjoy a kind of peace? I answer—sometimes their peace arises from sheer carelessness. They will not think, reflect, or consider. They do not intend to look about them, or before them. For “they count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away.”

They go through the world like blind men. They are on the verge of a precipice and they do not know their danger, or wish to know it. They will go over the edge of the cliff and be broken to pieces. But they have hardened their necks and if you warn them, they will hate you for it. These are your men that fill high the bowl and chase the flying hours with glowing feet. They live right merrily. Like the men of the old world, they marry and are given in marriage, they drink and are drunken—till the flood comes and there is no escape.

Many are quiet in conscience because of worldliness. They are too much occupied to give fair attention to the affairs of their souls. They are taken up with business. They are at it from morning to night—shutters up and shutters down. They can find time for nothing but counting their money, or shifting their stock. Adam was lost in the garden of Eden. But these men are lost in their shops, lost in their warehouses, lost in their ships, lost in their farms, lost in the market. They give no thought to the world to come, because this world engrosses them. From this kind of peace may we be delivered!

Some have a brawny conscience—I mean a conscience hard, callous, rough—you cannot make it feel. A healthy conscience is tender as a raw wound, which fears a touch. But some men’s consciences are covered with a thick skin and are devoid of feeling. Certain sinners have a conscience seared as with a hot iron and this brings with it that horrible peace which is the preface of eternal damnation.

Around us are persons who have a peace which Satan preserves. “When a strong man armed keeps his house, his goods are in peace.” When Satan is in full possession of a man, then no disturbing thoughts come in, and the sinful heart is well content. “They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” They may even die at peace, for the Psalmist complains, “there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.” Satan has filled them with “a strong delusion to believe a lie,” and so in peace they perish. They go willingly to destruction, like sheep to the slaughter.

And some have a peace of sullenness—an awful peace of despair, in which the man steels himself against that which he calls his fate. A man says, “I know I am to be lost. I have sinned myself beyond all hope of mercy. And why should I trouble myself further?” Like a condemned criminal, who hears the hammers fitting up the scaffold and gives himself up to silent despair, he feels, “I am doomed—it is all over with me.” O my Friend, it is not so! This is a lie of Satan’s own invention. While you live, there is hope! While you are yet in the land where Christ is preached, you may come to Him and live.

But deadness, sullenness, and obstinacy are your worst enemies. Waters of enmity to God often run silently because they are so deep. The man has a settled enmity against God and this makes him set his teeth and defy the Almighty in grim determination to perish. God save you from this! May you be driven out of every peace except that peace which comes from God! To that I now come.

God alone can speak true peace to the soul. When once a soul begins to feel its sinfulness and to tremble at the wrath to come, none but God can speak peace to it. Ministers cannot. I have often failed, when I have de

sired to bring comfort to troubled hearts. Books cannot do it, not even the most wise and gracious of them. The Bible itself cannot do it, apart from the Spirit of God. The ordinances of God’s House, whether they are Baptism, or the Lord’s Supper, or prayer, or preaching—none of these can bring peace to a heart apart from the still small voice of the Lord.

I pray that none of you may rest in anything short of a Divine assurance of salvation. See how the waves are tossing themselves on high! Hark to the howling of the wind! Rise, Peter, and bid the waves be quiet! Awake, John, and pour oil upon the waves! Ah, Sirs, the Apostles will themselves sink, unless a greater than they shall interpose. Only He who lay asleep near the tiller could say, “Peace, be still!” May He say that to everyone here who is troubled about his sins! The voice of the blood of Jesus speaks—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding.” We read that on the storm-tossed lake, “there was a great calm.” How great is the quiet of a soul which has seen and felt the power of the atoning sacrifice!

I have told you that only God can speak this peace. Let me remind you that He can give you that peace by speaking it. One word from the Lord is the quietus of all trouble. No deed is needed, only a word. Peace has not now to be made—the making of peace was finished more than eighteen hundred years ago on yonder Cross. The Lord Jesus, who is our peace, went up to the tree bearing our iniquities, and thus removed the dread cause of the great warfare between God and man. There He ended the quarrel of the Covenant. Hearken to these words, “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” He made peace by the blood of His Cross. Through His death, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. “It is finished.”

Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Now is the way paved for man to come back to God by reconciliation through sacrifice. There is no more blood to be shed, nor sacrifice to be offered—peace is finally made and it only remains for the Lord God to speak it to the conscience and heart by the Holy Spirit. Yet think not that for God to speak is a little thing. His voice is omnipotence in motion. He spoke the universe out of nothing—He spoke light out of darkness. Where the word of our King is, there is power.

He speaks and it is done. If He speaks peace, who can cause trouble? In Jesus Christ there is Divine peace for the guilty soul. “Come unto Me,” says He, “all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” From a tempest of distress to perfect peace—a word from the God of Peace can lift us in an instant.

Sooner or later the Lord will speak peace to His own. How blessed are the shalls and wills of the Lord God!—“He will speak peace unto His people.” Doubt it not. He WILL. He WILL. Some of you have lost your peace for a while. Yet, if you are Believers, “He will speak peace unto His people.” You have come to Christ and are trusting Him but you do not enjoy such peace as you desire. “He will speak peace unto His people.” There may be a time of battling and of struggling, the noise of war may disturb the camp for months—but in the end— “He will speak peace unto His people.”

I have seen some of the Lord’s true people terribly harassed year after year. One for a very long time was in the dark—wrecked on a barbarous coast and neither sun nor moon appearing. I do not excuse him for some of his despondency. There was a fault, undoubtedly, and there may also have been weakness of the brain. But he was a true child of God and at length he came out into the light and wrote a book which has cheered many. If peace comes not before, yet, “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”

The Lord will not put His child to bed in the dark—He will light his candle before he sleeps the sleep of death. Sickness of body and weakness of mind, or some other cause, may be a terrible kill-joy. But in the end, “The Lord will speak peace unto His people.” He cannot finally leave a soul that trusts in Him. No Believer shall die of despair. You may sink very low—but underneath are the everlasting arms and these will bring you up again. Many women of a sorrowful spirit have a hard time of it, but yet the Lord has set a day in which He will give beauty for ashes. O captive Daughter, your chains last not forever! Hold on to your hope—the night is very dark but the morning will surely come—for as God is Light, so shall His children be.

Beloved, when the Lord does speak peace to His people, what a peace it is! It is sound and safe. You may have as much of it as you will and suffer no harm. The peace of God is never presumptuous. It is a holy peace. And the more you have of it, the more you will strive to be like your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. It is a peace which rules the heart and mind and not merely the face and the tongue. It is a peace that will rise superior to circumstances. You may be very poor, but you shall find an inward wealth of contentment. You may be lonely, but communion with God will bring you company. You may be very sick in body, but peace of soul enables a man to bear pain without complaining.

There may even be a measure of depression of spirit about you and yet an inward peace will enable you to reason with yourself and say, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me?” If God gives you peace, the devil cannot take it away. If God breathes peace into your soul, the roughest winds of earth or Hell cannot blow that peace from you. They that have enjoyed this peace will tell you that it is the dawn of Heaven. They that walk in the light of God’s countenance, at this moment, are as the courtiers of a king, and for them there is a Paradise restored. Perfect peace brings a joy of which no tongue can fully tell.

There is no war above—Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all reconciled to us. There is no war within—conscience is cleansed and the heart relieved. There is no fear even of the arch-enemy below. He may grind his teeth at us, but he cannot destroy us. Even the world of nature is at peace with us. “For you shall be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.” “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” A deep peace, a high peace, a broad peace, an endless peace is ours.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” “Therefore being justified by faith, we have,” in the most emphatic and unlimited sense, “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Beloved Friends, do not be satisfied without the constant possession of unbroken peace. You may have it. You

 ought to have it. It will make you greater than princes and richer than misers. This peace will shoe your feet for ways of obedience or suffering. “May the peace of God keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!”

II. Now we must come down from our elevation, to talk about a more humbling theme, WHAT WE FEAR MAY MAR THIS BLESSING OF PEACE. “He will speak peace unto His people and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly.”

The grounds of a Believer’s peace are always the same, but a Believer’s enjoyment of that peace varies very greatly. I always have a right to the Divine inheritance but I do not always enjoy the fruits of that inheritance. Peace may be broken with the Christian, through great trouble, if his faith is not very strong. It need not be so. For some of those who have had the greatest fight of affliction have had the sweetest peace in Christ Jesus.

Peace may be broken through some forms of disease which prey upon the mind as well as the body. And when the mind grows weak and depressed from what are physical causes rather than spiritual ones, the infirmity of the flesh is apt to crush spiritual peace. Yet it is not always so. For sometimes, when heart and flesh have failed, God has yet been the strength of our heart, as He is our portion forever.

Inward conflict, too, may disturb our enjoyment of peace. When a man is struggling hard against a sin, when some old habit has to be hung up before the Lord, when corruption grows exceedingly strong and vigorous— as at seasons it may do—the Believer may not enjoy peace as he would wish. And yet I have known warring times when the fight within has not diminished my peace. “How so?” you may ask. I have found peace in the very fact that I was fighting! I have seen clearly that if I were not a child of God, I should not struggle against sin.

The very fact that I contend against sin, as against my deadliest foe, proves that I am not under the dominion of sin. And that fact brings to my soul a measure of peace. Satan, too—oh, it is hard to have peace under his attacks! He has a way of beating his drum of Hell at a rate which will let no Believer rest. He can inject the most profane thoughts. He can flutter us and worry us, by making us think that we are the authors of the thoughts which he fathers upon us—which are his and not ours. It is a very glorious thing, then, to be able to say, “Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again.”

When the Lord hides His face, as He may do as the result of grave offense that we have given Him, ah, then we cannot have peace. Peace runs out to a very low ebb when we are under withdrawals. And then we cry, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His feet!” We can never rest till we again behold the smiles of His face and take our place among His children.

But, after all, the chief reason why a Christian loses his peace is because he “turns again to folly.” What kind of folly? Folly is sin and error and everything contrary to Divine wisdom. I will briefly show you a few of the different shapes of this folly.

There is the folly of hasty judgment. Have you ever judged without knowing and considering all the surroundings of the case? Have you not come to a wrong conclusion, when you have ventured to judge the dealings of God with you? You have said, “This cannot be wise, this cannot be right—at any rate, this cannot be a fruit of love.” But you have found out afterwards that you were quite mistaken, that your severest trial was sent in very faithfulness. Your rash judgment was most evidently folly. And if you turn again to such folly in your next season of sorrow, you will certainly lose your peace.

What? Will you measure the infinite wisdom of God by the rule of your short-sighted policy? Are eternal purposes to be judged of according to the ticking of the clock? There can be no peace when we assume the throne of judgment and dare accuse our Sovereign of unkindness or mistakes—

*“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,*

*But trust Him for His Grace.”*  
Consider things in the long run when you would estimate the ways of God. Behold, He dwells in eternity and His measures are only to be seen in the light of the endless future. Oh, that we could either judge the Lord’s ways upon eternal principles, or leave off judging altogether! My Soul, be as a little child before the Lord and you will find peace!

Another kind of folly is of like order—it is repining and quarrelling with the Most High. Some are never pleased with God—how can He be pleased with them? There can be no use in contending with our Maker. For what are we as compared with Him? Let the grass contend with the scythe, or the tow fight with the flame. But let not man contend with God. Besides, who are you? “Who are you, O man, that replies against God?” It is true

you may be, like Job, terribly smitten and brought very low, and you cannot understand the why and the wherefore of it. But I pray you bow your head in sweet submission, for your heavenly Father must be doing the best possible thing for you.

Kick not against the pricks. When the ox, newly yoked to the plow, kicks against the goad, what is the result? It drives the goad into its own flank. It would not have been so hurt had it not defied the driver. “It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.” No man, by quarrelling with God, can gain any advantage, for the right is on God’s side and eternal principles establish His government. When the boat wars with the rock, we know which will suffer. Yield, O my Brothers and Sisters, yield to the Lord of Love! Your hope can only climb on bended knee—your peace can only return with bowed head. For to proud rebellion there is no peace, since it is folly of the grossest kind.

Another kind of folly to which men often turn is that of doubt and distrust. What peace you have had has come by faith. And when faith departs, peace goes, also. To doubt the Lord is folly. Even the least degree of it is folly of the worst order. When you said, “God is true and I will trust Him,” then your peace was like a river. Hope in Christ and in nothing else but Christ. When your expectation is in the Lord alone, then will your peace be like a river.

Some lose their peace by turning again to the folly of intellectual speculation. Some of our friends, who once walked in the light, as God is in the light, and were as happy as all the birds of the air, have now lost their joy. And all because they have read a pernicious book, which started for them a whole host of difficulties of which they never dreamed before. Would you like me to answer those difficulties? Suppose I took the trouble to do so and succeeded, what would happen?

You would read another book tomorrow, and come to me with another set of doubts. And if we were to slay all these, you would simply invite another band of invaders to land on the shores of your mind. Therefore I decline to begin the endless task. At Mentone, the trouble of some of our friends is to catch the mosquitoes, which worry them. But there is little or no use in it. For if you catch a dozen of these little pests, twenty-four will come to the funeral.

It is just the same with these intellectual difficulties. You may, by overcoming some of them, make room for more of a worse kind. No fact, however certain, is beyond a critic’s questioning. I have done with the whole band of quibblers. People say, “Have you seen the new book? It is terribly unsettling.” It will not unsettle me—first, because I know what I know. And secondly, because I do not care one atom what the unbeliever has to say. I care, indeed, so little, that I am not curious even to know what his craze may happen to be. “I know whom I have believed.”

I am going no further than that which the Holy Spirit has taught me through the infallible Word of God. What is more, I am not going to waste my time by reading what every doubter may please to write. I have had enough of these poisonous drugs, and will have no more. Does anyone say, “We ought to read everything”? No! No! If I go out to dinner and there should happen to come to table a steak that is far gone, I let it alone. When the knife goes into it, the perfume betrays it and I do not pass my plate up for a portion.

Others may carve slices from the carrion of unbelief. But having long eaten sweet Gospel food, I cannot bring my soul to feed on that which is unholy and only fit for dogs. That which denies Scripture and dishonors the blood of the Lord Jesus is more fit for burning than reading. If you have once been staggered by modern thought, do not turn again to that folly. Be not like silly people, who seem to fall down in the mud for the sake of being brushed. Why desire to be befogged and bewildered for the sake of getting set in the right way after long straying?

Stick to the Scriptures. When you have read so much of your Bibles that there is nothing more in them, then you may devote your time and study to some other book. But for the present keep to the Book whose author is the All-Wise Jehovah. Between the covers of this Book you shall find all wisdom—and I pray you turn not again to the folly which opposes the infallible and censures the perfect. God grant us Divine Grace to maintain our peace by never turning again to the folly of human wisdom!

But the worst form of folly is sin. Scripture continually calls sinners fools, and so they are. What a touching pleading there is about this use of language! “God will speak peace unto His people. But let them not turn again to folly.” As much as to say, “to turn aside will not only grieve Me, but it will harm you. Sin is not only fault, but folly. It will be to your own injury as well as to My displeasure.”

Dear child of God, are you out in the storm just now? Have you no rest? Let me whisper in your ear. Is there not a cause? Somebody on board your vessel has brought this storm upon you. Where is he? He is not among the regular sailors that work the ship. He is neither captain nor mate. But he is a stranger. Down under the hatches is a man named Jonah—is he the cause of the tempest? “No,” you say, “he is a good fellow, for he paid his fare.”

This makes me feel all the more suspicious. He is the cause of the mischief. You will never get peace until the Jonah of sin is overboard. Cast him into the sea and it will be calm. Many a child of God harbors a traitor and hardly knows that he is doing so. And the Lord is at war with him because of the harbored rebel. When Joab pursued Sheba, the son of Bichri, he came to the city of Abel, where Sheba had taken shelter. A wise woman came to him out of the city and pleaded for the people. Joab explained to her that he warred not with the city but with the rebel. And he added,

“Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.”

Then they cut off the head of Sheba and cast it out to Joab and he blew a trumpet and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. God is besieging you with trials and distresses, turning His batteries against your walls. And there is no chance of any peace until the traitorous sin shall be given up to vengeance. I do not know what particular sin it may be, but the head of it must be thrown over the wall—and then the warriors of the Lord will go their way. Bring forth the Achan, and the accursed thing, and let all Israel stone him with stones. Search and see! Arrest the hidden foe!

“Are the consolations of God too small for you? Is there any secret thing with you?” God help us to institute a solemn search this morning and may we discover the intruder and destroy him!

Beloved, I pray that no one of us may go back to folly. If we have ever tasted the peace of God and communion with God, can we leave it for earthly joys? Can we quit the banquets of infinite love for the coarse pleasures of sin? God forbid! Remember all the sorrow which sin has cost you already. Take not this viper a second time to your bosom. We were drowned in tears and sunken in distress when we found ourselves guilty of sin. Further and further from it may we fly. But never, never, may we turn back!

Remember what it cost your Lord to make you free from the consequences of former folly—never return to it. He had to die to save us from our folly—shall we count His death as nothing? Think what tugs the Spirit of God has had with us to bring us so far on our journey towards Heaven—are we now willing to turn our backs on God and holiness? Consider also what lies just beyond. Look a little way before you. Think of the street of gold, the river which never dries, the trees which bear eternal fruit, the harps of ceaseless melody.

Beloved, we cannot turn again to folly! O God, do not permit us to do so! Grant us Your peace, that by it we may be kept, both in heart and mind, loyal to You! Peace spoken to the soul by the Holy Spirit is the sure preventive of turning again to folly. Be sure that, if it passes all understanding, it also conquers all folly.

With minds at perfect peace with God, we set our face like a flint, and press on towards the haven where peace will never end. Glory be to God, who will bring us safely there! Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1559 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TOKENS FOR GOOD  
NO. 1559

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed: because You, Lord, have  
helped me and comforted me.”***

***Psalm 86:17.***

I WOULD have you note, beloved Friends, at the outset, how this man of God, in the hour of conflict, looks to his Divine Protector. He does not run about to consult with friends, nor does he set himself down to digest his bitter sorrow in solitude, but he gets away to the Lord, his God, who has covenanted to help him. That same God who in his brightest days was his great joy, is, in his darkest night, his surest consolation. Therefore he cries, “Lord, show me a token for good. Show it! Let it come from You. All other signs and tokens I can forego, but You show me a token for good and my spirit will be revived at once.” You see, he looks away from the secondary to the Primary, from the temporal to the Eternal—from that which he could see with his eyes—to Him whom, having not seen, he trusted and rejoiced in.

O mourner, learn wisdom from the father of the wisest of men! We need not hesitate to copy the pattern set by the man after God’s own heart! O you who are surrounded by persecutors, will you not imitate David? You cannot do better in every adversity than to look unto the Lord, the EverMerciful! I know you have been casting about to the right and to the left to find an anchor-hold and still the vessel drifts. Now, throw the great bower anchor into the depths! Let it go right down out of sight and let it get a grip upon eternal faithfulness and your ship shall outride both wind and tide!

Trust the quicksand of human confidence no longer. Look only to the Lord! It is a severance from man, a complete deliverance from the arm of flesh that God designs by our trouble and the sooner we come to it the better for us. Certainly we shall the more quickly obtain the benefit designed by our trouble and probably we shall the sooner come to the end of it—

*“Trust with a faith untiring  
In your Omniscient King,  
And you shall see admiring  
What He to light will bring!  
Of all your griefs the reason*

*Shall at the last appear;  
Though hidden for a season  
It will shine in letters clear.”*

Observe that in the case of David, all his troubles drove him to his God. I have noticed in the case of too many professors that they seem to have a fair-weather religion, a summer-season faith which shrinks and loses its color in a little rain or a sharp frost, or when the wind blows from the cold corner of affliction.

I hear of some who, when they are very poor, do not come up to the House of God. They say they have not proper clothes to come in—as if the Lord had respect unto our garments which are nothing better than the covering of our shame! This is an idle excuse and yet I know that poverty does drive some professors away from the God whom they profess to worship—they murmur and become discouraged and give all up in a minute—as if they only loved God for the sake of bread, as a hungry dog will follow a stranger who feeds him. There are others who say, “I cannot hold up my head among my Brethren as I used to do and so I stay away from the congregation.” As if God needed you to hold your heads up—as if He did not look most to those who hold down both their heads and their hearts!

What? Will you turn away from the stream because you are thirsty? Will you leave the bread because you are hungry? Is not godliness meant to be a comfort to you in your time of trouble? Do not poor men need the Gospel? Do you not require it all the more, now that your comforts are so greatly diminished? Above all things, seek the Lord’s face when trials surround you, or else, assuredly, you cannot be His own, for God’s people, though they cry to Him daily, are yet driven to Him more and more in proportion as they are brought low and thrown into distress. “They cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distresses.”

This is one of the sure marks of the children of God—they kiss the rod and, the more the Lord chastens them, the more they cling to Him.  
When the Lord smites, the ungodly kick against Him—they are like the bullock that will not plow by reason of stubbornness and when it feels a goad it kicks and will not go on, but is bent on having its own way. But when the Lord has trained His people and accustomed them to the yoke, they are obedient to the goad as soon as they feel it and yield to His will as soon as it is made known No, more than that—I think the more God chastens His people, the more they love Him! I am persuaded that the most whipped of the Lord’s family are the best of His children. I do not say that any of you may wish for affliction—you will have enough of it without wishing for it—but I do avow my belief that the favorites of Heaven are those who feel the most tribulation.  
The choicest plants in God’s garden are those that are watered with affliction and made wet with the night dews of grief. His rarest vines are those which feel most of the knife and are cut back almost down to the root. There is no fragrance so sweet as that which distils from a flower which the great Farmer has bruised. And when He seems, even, to have trod upon it as though He despised it, He has been secretly blessing it, for the broken and the contrite heart He prizes above all things! Therefore, dear Friends, let all your griefs send you in prayer to God and you will then grow in blessing by every tribulation!  
When big waves of trouble come, pray that they may wash you on the Rock of Ages and they will do you no harm. When you lose anything, try to make a gain of it by going to your God, that He may sanctify the loss. Whenever you are afflicted, instead of running away from Him who smites you, run inwards to His bosom! If a man is very weak and he is contending with a strong adversary, he will do well to get close to him. The farther off, the heavier is the blow when a strong man deals it. But when the weak man closes in with him, how can the strong man smite him? What does God say? “Let him lay hold on My strength and I will make peace with him.” Fly in spirit to your God! Fly to Him even when He seems angry! Run onto the point of His sword, for He will not harm the soul that confides in Him! It cannot be that humble trust should meet with a repulse. Jesus declares, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” And if you will but trust Him and, when He seems angry, will still fly to Him, you shall find rest unto your souls. You children of God, mind this!  
Once more, notice that the Psalmist, while he thus looks to God and is driven to Him by his troubles, manifestly looks only to God. There is not, in this Psalm, a word about friends, allies, or helpers. He has but one request and this is, “Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me.” His heart is evidently saying—  
*“My spirit looks to God alone;  
My rock and refuge is His throne;  
In all my fears, in all my straits,  
My soul on His salvation waits.”*  
Only God! Oh, that is a word to be learned, to be learned by experience and most assuredly none will ever know it unless they are taught by the Holy Spirit! I do not think we often learn it till we hear it in the thunder of Divine power when the deep-throated tempest within the soul mutters— “Only God! God alone!” In fair weather we are for mixing our trust, but when the whirlwind is abroad, none but God will serve our turn. O my Brothers and Sisters, if you set one foot upon the rock of Divine faithfulness and the other foot upon the sand of human confidence, you will go down with a great fall! Both feet on the rock! Remember that!

Your whole confidence must be fixed upon your Lord. Hang only upon that sure nail upon which hangs the whole universe and hang nowhere else. What does David say? “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Beware of setting up a rival in the temple of your trust. Who is it that you would yoke with God? What helper is there that you would put side by side with Him? If you could depend upon an angel— does it not make you smile at your folly to think of saying, “I trust in God and an angel”? Why there is no pairing such disparities! The Infinite Creator of all is not to be yoked, even, with the most glorious of His creatures—and yet you would put your fellow man into the yoke with God and trust in these two!  
Go, yoke an angel with an ant if you will, but never think of joining God with man and making the two your confidence when God is All in All. Oh to be cut clear of all visible supports and props and holdfasts! You have seen a balloon well filled, struggling to rise—what kept it down? It longed to mount above the clouds into the calm serene and yet it lingered. What hindered it? The ropes which bound it to earth! Cut clear the ropes and then see how it mounts! With a spring it leaps upward while we are gazing into the open sky. O for such a clearance and such a mounting for our spirits! Alas, we are hindered and hampered! What are the bonds which detain us? Are they not our visible supports and reliances?  
O my Soul, your human confidences have been to you like the iron chain which binds the captive eagle to the rock! If that confidence of yours were gone—if that chain on which you do dote so much were broken, even though it were with a rough blacksmith’s hammer—then you could stretch your wings and be a child of the sun and dwell aloft amid the eternal light! Oftentimes the things which we most dread prove to be our grand necessity—by being deprived of earthly comforts we are cut clear of everything except our God! The Lord bring us into this state of high spiritual emancipation!  
With this as a preface, I now come to notice the particular prayer which David, in this state of mind, puts up. It was necessary to give you this preface as a kind of guard against the very common tendency which exists among God’s people to depend upon signs and tokens. Especially as we are going to preach a little upon this prayer for a “token,” it was essential to begin aright lest we should add to the too common craving for signs and wonders.  
We will dwell, first, upon the request for a token and then, if we have time, we will touch upon the result which David says would come of having such a token—that those which hated him would see it and be ashamed because God had helped him and comforted him.  
I. David puts up A REQUEST FOR A TOKEN. It was a token from God, mark you, and it was a token entirely according to God’s will. Never forget that it was a token asked in faith and not in unbelief, for there is a great distinction here. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we have no right to say, “My God, I will believe in You if You will give me a token and, if not, I will remain in hesitating unbelief,” for the English of that is, “I will reckon You to be false unless You show me a sign according to my will.” If God is true, you are bound to believe Him, whether He give you a token or not! And you are not permitted to suspend your faith upon conditions of your own inventing. Whether He will or will not give you a token must be according to His own mind.  
He may give or withhold as He pleases, but you are bound to believe Him since every man is bound to believe the Truth of God. God has never been false to you! You have, therefore, no cause to doubt Him. If He gives you the light, be thankful, but as His child you are bound to trust Him in the dark. If He speaks to you a favorable word, you are to be glad, but you are bound to trust Him even if He speaks nothing but rough words to you, for He is just as true. His Truth and your belief in that Truth must not be thought to depend upon signs and tokens—His Word is very sure and may not be questioned. Moreover, we have known some who professed to be the children of God who have picked out certain tokens according to their own whims and fancies and follies and they have spoken as if God must do this or that at their dictation.  
I fear that in some this is a wicked presumption not to be tolerated for a moment. At best it is a childish folly which men in Christ Jesus ought, long ago, to have outgrown. I do not doubt that the Lord has indulged some of His little children with wonders and signs while they were very, very feeble, which He will never give them again and which they ought never to seek again—which, indeed, now that they have grown up to riper years and to more strength of Grace, they ought, themselves, to put away as childish things. Not a few of these signs they may even suspect, saying, “Perhaps, after all, there was not so much in those signs and tokens as I thought there was. They helped me just then, but I could not rely upon them now—I prefer that which is better and surer.”  
The Apostle Peter, after he has described Christ upon the mount as manifesting Himself to His servants in the Transfiguration, declares, “We have a more sure word of prophecy.” What? More sure than the Transfiguration? Yes, more sure, even, than the evidence of their eyes when they saw their Lord glorified upon the holy mountain! If you have ever been upon the mountain with Christ and if you have seen all His brightness, you are still not to compare, even, the sight of your eyes when they see the best and brightest that they can see, with the Word of Testimony which must be sure—a light that shines in a dark place! All the heavenly experiences which we have ever had are not to be trusted in comparison with the Word of God in the Bible!  
I say it advisedly—even the sweetest communion we have ever had with Christ may, after all, be suspect and, indeed, it is upon such ripe fruit that Satan soon sets his hand that he may rob us of its savor, if possible, for he is not slow to cast doubts upon the holiest joys of God’s elect. There may come a time when we shall fear that we were carried away by excitement, or deluded by fanaticism, but He who speaks the Word of Scripture cannot lie! And when His Spirit speaks that same Truth of God into the soul, we have, therein, a testimony which can never be doubted but must be accepted over the head of everything. “Let God be true and every man a liar”—ourselves and all—all liars as compared with the eternal Truths of the Revelation of God the Holy Spirit! The basis of faith is not our experience, but the Testimony of God and we must mind we do not make the feet of our image partly of God’s gold and partly of our clay. Our experience may be in error, but the Infallible Word of God cannot be and it is upon that, alone, which we must stand.  
Yet we may ask for tokens in a subordinate sense. Trusting in the Lord, token or no token—believing His Word, evidence or no evidence—we may, then, humbly ask confirmatory seals to our souls. Taking His promise as it stands and believing it, though the heavens, themselves, should seem to rock and reel—we may then say, “Yet Lord, inasmuch as I am but dust and ashes and, therefore, weak and trembling, show me a token for good.” We may feel quite safe in seeking tokens of the kind which are mentioned in this Psalm. And first, we may beg for answers to prayer, because the Psalm begins with, “Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me” and farther on we read in the sixth verse, “Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer and attend to the voice of my supplications.”  
There is no fanaticism in expecting God to answer prayer and there is no misuse of logic in drawing the inference that if He does hear my prayer in the time of trouble, this is a token for good to my soul. Has my prayer been accepted before Him? Have I received the gracious answer of peace? Then let me be comforted! Was I especially in deep distress where no man could help me and did I cry to Him and did He come to my rescue? Assuredly, this is a seal that is set to my soul that I am no hypocrite! This is a token that I am no stranger to God and that I am not cast away from His Presence! Answered prayers are hopeful arguments of acceptance. David fitly said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,” and then he joyfully added, “But verily God has heard me.” Thus he proved the soundness of his heart before God!  
I ask you to look back and see whether you have, indeed, prevailed with God in secret prayer. Have you had your Jabboks and your Carmels? Do I not speak to many who are familiar with the great Hearer of prayer? Has He not often heard you? I am not too bold when I assert that the Lord has granted me, according to the desire of my heart, times without number! The devil himself can never dispute me out of facts—facts which shall forever stand on my memory, “engraved as in eternal brass,” for out of the depths I have cried unto God and He has as distinctly answered my prayers as though He had torn the heavens and come down to succor His servant! With overwhelming delight He fills me, for He has had respect unto my cry. His tenderness to me in this respect has made my life singularly happy though I have had a large share of pain and depression.  
When I think over the seasons in which the Lord has specially answered me, I bid defiance to all the skeptics and scientists who haunt our footsteps. Brethren in Christ, you have, each of you, in your own way, according to your own need, had sure instances of the faithfulness of God to you and these have been reviving tokens of love! At this present be of good cheer. Even if, for a while, the heavens should seem as brass and prayer should not be heard, remember that He did hear you in times gone by and He is the same God and changes not and, therefore, is hearing, still, and will answer, by-and-by. Therefore cry mightily to Him!  
It may be that your prayer is like a ship, which, when it goes on a very long voyage, does not come home laden so soon but, when it

 does come home, it has a richer freight. Mere coasters will bring you coals, or such like ordinary things. But they that go afar to Tarshish return with gold and ivory! Coasting prayers such as we pray every day bring us many necessities, but there are great prayers which, like the old Spanish galleons, cross the main ocean and are longer out of sight—but come home laden with golden freight! When prayer has tarried, the Lord our God has made up for the delays and shown us why He delayed—to give us a richer and a rarer blessing through our waiting and also to prepare us to receive it. Go on in prayer if you have no immediate answer and let the answers you have had in years gone by be tokens for good to your soul at this time— *“God lives still!  
Trust, my Soul, and fear no ill.  
God is good. From His compassion  
Earthly help and comfort flow!  
Strong is His right hand to fashion  
All things well for men below.  
Trials often the most distressing,  
In the end have proved a blessing.  
Why, then, my Soul, despair?  
God still lives and hears prayer.”*  
You meet with another class of tokens in the Psalm and these concern the preservation of character. Kindly read the second verse—“Preserve my soul, for I am holy.” I know I am speaking in these dark and troubled times to many of God’s children who are tried in business and sorely exercised by the general depression—your great fear arises out of a dread of failure to discharge your debts. You have been praying to the Lord about your business and, perhaps, Satan has tempted you to a measure of unbelief against which you are daily fighting. Now, has the Lord helped you to do that which is honest and upright before men? Has He preserved your soul because you are consecrated to Him?  
You have been a loser, but in that loss can you say, “No fault attaches to deceit—it is the act of God. Things have not prospered with me, but I have been diligent and I have used my best discretion. I have curtailed every expense to save as much as possible. I have sought to eat my own bread and not the bread of another man and I would sooner come to labor with my hands in the most menial service than that any should say of me that I have forgotten the way of uprightness and integrity.” If such is the case, you will feel acutely the difficulties of your path, but you must not give way to despondency. Look up and play the man and by no means give up!  
Fly to the Lord in this hour of need and see what He will do. It is written, “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,” and if such has been your case it is a token for good. You have not lost much if your character remains untarnished. After all, “a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.” And, “a good name is better than precious ointment.” When God gives a man Grace to rejoice in his abundance, it is a great thing. But it is an equal favor when He gives to others of His people Grace to rejoice that they are brought low. There is often more contentment in a narrower sphere than in a wider one and a great deal less care and anxiety and more fellowship with God in a cottage than in a broad mansion!  
If God keeps your character spotless, reckon that the smell of fire has not passed upon you. If the Lord enables you to do the right thing, let Him do what He pleases with you. If we can pay 20 shillings in the pound and walk out of the house free from any charge of unjust dealing, we may feel that the worst grief of all is over, for to an honest heart it is a crushing trial to be unable to pay every man his own. May the Holy Spirit lead you in the path of uprightness and you need not envy any among the sons of men.  
A third form of token for good is found in deliverance from trouble. We have that in the second verse also—“O You, my God, save Your servant that trusts in You!” And all through the Psalm David is crying for deliverance from trouble. I am addressing many who have felt the strokes of tribulation. You have been brought very low. In your horror it seemed to you like the lowest Hell, but you have been brought up from it and you can, at this hour, sing of delivering Grace. We are not all hanging our harps on the willows—some of us are praising God upon the high sounding cymbals because of His delivering mercy, for He has brought our soul out of prison, has delivered our soul from death, our eyes from tears and our feet from falling.  
When these things come, they are to be regarded as tokens for good if they come as the result of prayer and faith. Our personal testimony should be like that of David in the 34th Psalm—“I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.” When our distresses are ended, our songs should begin, even as the Psalmist says of men rescued from peril—they pray and then they praise. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distresses. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”  
There ought to be praises where there have been deliverances. When we have gone to God in prayer with open mouth and He has filled it, then should we go back again with the open mouth, to have it filled with His praises all the day long! Come, Friends, look back upon the rescues and recoveries of the past and rejoice in the Lord! One good old saint, when she heard one sing—  
*“Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through,”*said, “Why, my road, when I look back upon it, is paved with Ebenezers! I cannot take a step but what I step upon a stone of help and on both sides I see so many records of the Lord’s goodness that the road seems walled up by them on both sides.” Many of us can say the same. Surely— *“His love in time past forbids us to think, He’ll leave us, at last, in trouble to sink.”*  
If He has delivered us from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear, shall we be afraid of that uncircumcised Philistine? No, but the giant boaster shall fall before us! In the name of the Lord we will destroy all future foes because in His name we have destroyed the same before. That is fine language which Paul uses in the Epistle to the Corinthians—“Who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.” These three forms of tokens for good are very sure and very sober—not at all like those which fanaticism seeks after and yet they are most valuable! Answered prayers, preservations from sin and deliverances from trouble are rich jewels from the Bridegroom’s hands— marks of His most costly love. Those who have them should not forget them. “Shall a maid forget her ornaments?” Shall gifts of the Bridegroom be put away as though they were of no value? God forbid!  
There is another form of token which must never be overlooked and that is a sense of pardoned sin. This comes in the third and fifth verses. “Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto You daily. For You, Lord, are good and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon You.” Even though we have been sustained in our integrity, we must, nevertheless, be conscious of many faults. You cannot go through either the joys of this world or the sorrows of it without incurring a measure of defilement. He who picks his steps the most successfully will yet gather soil upon his feet and they will need washing by those dear hands which, alone, can take away the stain of sin! When that washing is given, it is a very choice token of love.  
If you feel that your conscience is purged from dead works—if you are walking in the light as God is in the light and are enjoying fellowship with the Father while the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses you from all sin, then rejoice in the token for good which is given you! If you know the power of that Word of God, “There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”—if you are, indeed, “accepted in the Beloved”—then know of a surety that one of the best tokens for good is in your possession! It may be that your purse is scant, but your sin is forgiven! It may be that disease is creeping over your flesh, but your sin is forgiven! What a bliss is yours, whatever your trial may be!  
Suppose yourself to be in danger of shipwreck—the ship is going down—the passengers are shrieking with terror, for there is nothing before them but the murderous waves. The boiling floods will soon conceal the last vestige of the ship. Grim Death opens his wide jaws! The last moment has come! But what do I see? What was that which rose upon the crest of the wave? It was a lifeboat! Yes! Here comes a lifeboat and you are put on board! What are your thoughts at the time? What must be your thoughts? What? Did you whine, “I have lost my best suitcase which I left in my cabin”? What a fool you would be if you talked like that! The boatmen would be ready to throw you back into the sea!  
No, your gratitude forgets all minor things and rejoices in the grand deliverance. You cry, “My life is saved! My life is saved! Blessed be the Lord for saving me! My money, my very clothes—for I started up in my sleep and leaped into the lifeboat—I have lost them all, but I am alive and that is enough! Thank God I shall see my native land again!” Shall a man who is delivered from Hell and whose sins are forgiven go whining all the day long because he has lost his money, or some other trifle—for trifle it is as compared with his soul? “Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.” And if our life is saved in Christ Jesus through the forgiveness of our sin by His most precious blood, how can we fret?  
Why, Man, God has given you a mercy that may swallow up your troubles as Aaron’s rod swallowed up all the serpents. “Strike me, my God,” said one of old, “strike me as You will, now that You have forgiven me!” The pardon of sin is such a token for good that all ills disappear before it! There is another token for good mentioned in the Psalm which you may well pray for. You will find it in the fourth verse—“Rejoice the soul of Your servant: for unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” This is support under trial. It is a very blessed token for good when you are able to keep calm, quiet and happy in the midst of losses, crosses, bereavements and afflictions. All the water in the sea will never hurt the ship so long as it is outside—it is only that which enters the vessel that can sink it. And therefore the Savior says, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God; believe also in Me.” In the world you shall have tribulation, but let not your heart be troubled.

Now, are you, dear Friend, conscious, at this time, while everything is going against you, that you never were happier than you are now? Can you give all up? Can you be resigned to your heavenly Father’s will? Does a sweet patience steal over you? Do you sometimes say to yourself and to your friends, “I would not have believed that I could have passed through this as I am doing”? Well, that is a token for good and you may take comfort from it. What does it matter to a man, after all, whether God increases the load and increases the strength, or whether He decreases the load and decreases the strength? If a man has to carry a pound weight and he is so weak that he can only manage to carry eight ounces, well, he is an overloaded man. But if a man had to carry a ton and God gave him strength enough to carry two, why, he would be a lightly-loaded man, would he not? It is not the weight of the burden, Brothers and Sisters, it is the proportion of the burden to the strength.  
Now, the proportion of the burden to the strength was settled long ago—thousands of years ago. It is written, “As your days, so shall your strength be” and there was One who proved it 1,800 years ago and exclaimed, “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.” You see the scale—if there is an ounce of suffering, there is an ounce of consolation. Almighty Wisdom keeps the measure exact! Let the tribulation abound! Put it into the left-hand scale. Heap it up! Put in more and more trial. What a weight it is! Yes, but there you see in the right-hand scale the balancing consolation—and I think if we were wise, we would be willing to accept—no, we would even rejoice in the abounding tribulations because of the abounding consolations!  
We shall always be little, I am afraid, while our trials are little. But when we get into the deeper waters, so that the Lord helps us to swim and He makes men of us—then we begin to glory in tribulation because the power of God does rest upon us! Oh may the Lord give us faith to come up to this point and this shall be forever a blessed token for good when we can say—  
*“I stand upon the mount of God,  
With sunlight in my soul!  
I hear the storms in vales beneath,  
I hear the thunders roll.  
But I am calm with You, my God,  
Beneath these glorious skies  
And to the heights on which I stand,  
Nor storms nor clouds can rise.”*  
May God endow us with that token for good—for serenity in suffering, patience in tribulation, joy in the very prospect of death—these are all as white stones which are the secret signs of Divine favor.  
Cheering visits from Christ and fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit are also most sure tokens for good and if not mentioned expressly in the Psalm, must not be omitted in our sermon. They are, however, here in such phrases as these—“Rejoice the soul of Your servant,” in verse four. “Unite my heart to fear Your name,” in verse eleven. “O turn unto me and have mercy upon me,” in verse 16 and in the latter clause of our text, “You, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.” The Lord graciously visits His people, the clouds break, the night declines and the day begins to dawn! Precious promises are applied to the heart with reviving power, hope is strengthened and joy is renewed.  
Sweet communion is enjoyed under affliction and Christ is seen sitting as a Refiner at the mouth of the furnace. Sin is no longer allowed to burden the heart. Yes, the very memory of it, so far as it would cause pain to the mind, is utterly removed and the glad spirit rejoices in the consciousness of full acceptance with God. Ordinances and the Word become sweeter than honey or the honeycomb and the man feasts in the House of the Lord as one who is an honored guest at a royal banquet where the banner of Jesus’ love waves over his head and he leans his head on his Lord’s bosom! This is a token for good, the memory of which shall cheer him for many a long day and, being treasured up like some sweet smelling herb, shall serve to make his sick chamber or prison fragrant.  
O the joy of saints when the Bridegroom is with them! They cannot fast or be of a sad countenance, for their assurance of His Divine Love drives every care and fear away—  
*“‘Tis like the singing of the birds  
When winter’s frost is fled!  
And like the warmth the sun affords  
To creatures almost dead.  
‘Tis like the comfort of a calm  
Which stills a stormy sea  
And like the tender, healing balm  
To such as wounded be.”*  
Of such tokens for good may we enjoy until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.  
II. I had many things to say, but I remember Paul’s mistake that he made when he preached until midnight and Eutychus fell from the third loft, for he had gone to sleep. And as I could not possibly raise a sleeper from the dead, as Paul did, I will not try the experiment of preaching as long as Paul did! I cannot say anything as to THE RESULT OF SUCH TOKENS. The influence of these tokens upon our foes must be undescribed except that many a time the favor of God to His people has been so conspicuous that their most malicious adversaries have stood in awe of them. Their answered prayers have been like armor to them! Their patience has lit up their faces with an awe-inspiring splendor and their integrity has been a wall of fire round about them.  
Even the devil has stood abashed in the presence of the favored ones when God has dressed them in their marriage robes! He has known that they were of that chosen race against which he can never prevail. As for other enemies—“When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with Him.” Like Pilate’s wife, even worldly people have pleaded that good men should be left alone—the Lord has made them dream of the glory of their virtue and they have been afraid. There is a dignity which hedges about those who are kings unto God. They that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth are afraid because of the tokens for good which God sets on His saints.  
Here we leave these words, only adding this—what an unhappy state must those be in who have troubles but have no God to go to! Those who have enemies, but no heavenly Defender—darkness and no Star of hope! How poor must you be who cannot escape affliction and yet have no Helper in affliction! You run to your friends, do you? Ah well, they are a poor refuge to fly to, for mostly they are our friends when we can help them. When we need anything from them, they do not know us! You trust yourself, do you? Ah well, I thought little of your friends, but I think less of you, for you are dust and ashes and nothing else—and if your trust is in yourself, it is a dream! And so you are a self-made man! Your own creator? You need not be so very proud of your work! As you made yourself and keep yourself going, you will come to a frightful end, one of these days, when the inward force decays into weakness and all the springs of Nature fail!  
Whatever you make, your god is like yourself and both you and it must pass away before long! Your hope shall be as a spider’s web and your expectation shall melt like the frost when the sun rises. The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming and woe unto hypocrites in that day! It will go ill with self-confident men in that day! But as for such as trust the Lord, do you know what they say? And they speak as Inspiration bids them speak—“I shall be satisfied.” I am not yet, but I shall be satisfied. And when shall I be satisfied? “When I awake with Your likeness.” When the archangel’s trumpet sounds and wakes me into immortal perfection, then shall I be satisfied!  
Oh seek the Savior’s face! dear Hearts, that never have sought Him yet, seek Him now! There is no satisfaction to be had apart from Him! Get away to Him! Get away to Him tonight! Cry unto Him, for He will hear you! Come unto Him, for He will receive you! May His Divine Spirit lead you to cast yourselves on Him, for He will in no wise cast you out! The Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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“READY, YES, READY!”  
NO. 2868

A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“Ready to perish.” “Ready to forgive.” “The graves are ready for me.” Isaiah 27:13. Psalm 86:5. Job 17:1.**

WHEN attempting to prepare for this service, I found it impossible to fix my mind upon any one subject. This afternoon I had to take rather a long journey to visit a friend who is sick unto death. And at his bedside I trust I have learned some lessons of encouragement and have been animated by witnessing the joy and peace which God grants to His children in their declining hours. Finding that I could not fix upon any one subject, I thought that I would have three. It may be that out of the three, there will be one intended by Divine Grace for a third of the audience, the second for another third and the other for the rest, so that there will be a portion of meat in due season for all. You know, dear Friends, that the motto of our navy is, “Ready, yes, ready!” That is something like my present subject, for I have three texts in which the word, “Ready,” occurs, each time in a different connection.

I. The first text will be especially addressed to those who are under concern of soul, having been led, by the enlightening influence of the Divine Spirit, to see their state by nature and to tremble in the prospect of their deserved doom. The text which will suit their case is in Isaiah 27:13—“READY TO PERISH.” “They shall come which were ready to perish.”

By nature, all men, whether they know it or not, are ready to perish. Human nature is, like a blind man, always in danger. No, worse than that, it is like a blind man upon the verge of a tremendous cliff, ready to take the fatal step which will lead to his destruction. The most callous and proud, the most careless and profane cannot, by their indifference or their boasting, altogether evade the apprehension that their state, by nature, is alarming and defenseless. They may try to laugh it away from their minds, but they cannot laugh away the fact. They may shut their eyes to it, but they shall no more escape, by shutting their eyes, than does the silly ostrich escape from the hunter by thrusting its head into the sand. Whether you will have it so, or not, fast young man in the dawn of your days—whether you will have it so, or not, blustering merchant in the prime of your age—whether you will have it so, or not, hardened old man in the petrified state of your moral conscience—it is so— you are ready to perish!

Your jeers cannot deliver you. Your sarcasms about eternal wrath cannot quench it. And all your contemptuous scorn and your arrogant pride cannot evade your doom—they do but hasten it. There are some persons, however, who are aware of their danger—to them I speak. They are fitly described by the Spirit of God in these words of the Prophet— “The great trumpet shall be blown and they shall come which were ready to perish.” Having passed through this anguish, myself, I think I can describe, from experience, what some of you are now suffering.

You are ready to perish, in the first place, because you feel sure that you will perish. You did not think so once, but you do now. Once you could afford to put away the thought, with a laugh, as a matter which might, or might not, be true, but, anyway, it did not much concern you. But now you feel that you will be lost as surely as if it could be demonstrated to you by logic. In fact, the Divine logic of the Law of God has thundered it into your soul and you know it. You feel it to be certain that you shall, before long, be driven from the Presence of God with that terrible sentence, “Depart, you cursed.” If any unbeliever should tell you that there is no wrath to come, you would reply, “There is, for I feel it is due me. My conscience tells me that I am already condemned and before long I am quite certain to drink of the wormwood and the gall of the wrath of God.”

You have signed your own death warrant, you have put on the black cap and condemned yourself. Or, rather, you have pleaded guilty before your Judge—you have said, “Guilty, my Lord,” and now you think you see before your eyes the scaffold and yourself ready to be executed. You feel it to be so sure that you even anticipate the Judgment Day—you dreamed of it, the other night, and you thought you heard the trumpet of the archangel opening all the graves and wakening all the dead. You have already, in imagination, stood before the bar of God! You feel your sentence to be so certain that conscience has read it over in your hearing and anticipated its terrors. You are among those who are ready to perish, so permit me to say that I am glad you have come here, for this is the very spot where God delights to display His pardoning Grace! He is ready to save those who are thus ready to perish. Those who write themselves down as lost are the special objects of our Savior’s mission of mercy, for, “the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

You are ready to perish, in another sense, for you feel as if your perishing was very near. You are like the dying man who gasps for breath and thinks that each gasp will be his last—his pulse is feeble, his tongue is dry with feverish heat, the clammy sweat is on his brow. The Valley of the Shadow of Death casts its gloomy shade on his pale cheeks and he feels that he will soon die. Is it not thus that some of you feel just now? You feel that you are coming near to the wrath of God. I have known the day when, as I lay down to rest, I dreaded the thought that, perhaps, I should never awake in this world, or, at mid-day I have walked in the fields and wondered that the earth did not open and swallow me up! A terrible noise was in my ears—my soul was tossed to and fro—I longed to find a refuge, but there seemed to be none, while always ringing in my ears were the words, “The wrath to come!” “The wrath to come!” “The wrath to come!”

Oh, how vividly is the wrath to come pictured before the eyes of the awakened sinner! He does not look upon it as a thing that is to come in ten, twelve, or 20 years, but as a thing that may be before long, yes, even today! He looks upon himself as ready to perish because his final overthrow appears to be so close. I am glad if any of you are in this plight, for God does not thus alarm men unless He has purposes of mercy concerning them and designs for their good! He has made you fear you are perishing that you may have no perishing to fear! He has brought it home to you in this life that He may remove it forever from you in the life that is to come! He has made you tremble now, that you may not tremble then. He has put before you these dreadful things that, as with a fiery finger, they may point you to Christ, the only Refuge and, as with a thundering voice, they may cry to you, as the angels cried to Lot, “Escape for your life, look not behind you, neither stay you in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed!”

It may be that I am also addressing some who not only realize the sureness and the nearness of their destruction, but they have begun to feel it. “Begun to feel it,” asks someone, “is that possible?” Yes, that it is. When day and night God’s hand is heavy upon us and our moisture is turned into the drought of summer, we begin to know something of what a sinner feels when Justice and the Law are let loose upon him. Did you ever read John Bunyan’s, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners? There was a man who had, even here, foretastes of the miseries of the lost. And there are some of us who can, even now, hardly look back to the time of our conviction without a shudder. I hope there is not a creature alive who has had deeper convictions than I had, or five years of more intolerable agony than those which crushed the very life out of my youthful spirit. But this I can say—that terror of conscience, that alarm about the wrath of God, that intense hatred of past sin and yet consciousness of my inability to avoid it in the future were such combinations of thought that I can only describe them in George Herbert’s words—

*“My thoughts are all a case of knives  
Breaking my poor heart.”*

Oh, the tortures of the man who feels his guilt, but does not know the remedy for it! To look leprosy in the face, but not to know that it may be healed! To walk the hospital and hear that there is no physician there! To see the flame, but not to know that it can be quenched! To be in the dungeon, but never to know the rescue and deliverance! O you that are ready to perish, I sympathize with you in your present sufferings, but I do not lament them! This is the way in which God begins with those whom He intends to bless—not to the same degree in all, but yet after the same kind. He destroys our confidence in our own works and then gives us confidence in Christ’s work. You know how Bunyan describes Christian as being much tumbled up and down in his mind. And when his wife and children came round about him, he could only tell them that the city in which they lived was to be destroyed—and though his easygoing neighbors told him not to believe it and not to make such a fuss about it, the truth had come home to him with too much power to be put away. Atheist might say it was all a lie and Pliable might give slight heed to it and pretend to believe it for a season, but Christian knew it to be true, so he ran to the wicket gate, and the Cross, that he might escape from the wrath to come. To the careless, these words, “Ready to perish,” should sound an alarm. May God the Holy Spirit, while I preach upon the second text, enable me to blow the great trumpet of the jubilee! May the gladsome sound reach the heart of him that is ready to perish! May he know that Divine Mercy brought him here that he might find a God ready to pardon!

II. My second text is in Psalm 86:5—“READY TO FORGIVE.” Does not that ring like a silver bell? The other was a doleful note, like that of St. Sepulcher’s bell when it tolls the knell of a criminal about to be executed—“Ready to perish.” But this rings like a marriage peal—“Ready to forgive. Ready to forgive.” What does it mean when it says that God is ready to forgive?

“Ready” means, as you all know, prepared. A man is not ready to go by railway until his trunk is packed and he is about to start. A man cannot be said to be ready to emigrate till he has the means to pay his passage and the different things needed for his transit, and for his settling down when he gets to his destination. No road is ready till it is cleared. Nothing is ready, in fact, till it is prepared. Sinner, God is ready to forgive—that is, everything is prepared by which you may be forgiven! The road used to be blocked up but Jesus Christ has, with His Cross, tunneled every mountain, filled every valley and bridged every chasm so that the way of pardon is now fully prepared. There is no need for God to say, “I would pardon this sinner, but how shall My justice be honored?” Sinner, God’s justice has been satisfied, the sin of all who believe, or who ever will believe, was laid upon Christ when He died upon the tree! If you believes in Him, your sin was punished upon Him and it was forever put away by the great Atonement which He offered, so that, now, the righteous God can come out of the ivory palace of His mercy, stretch out His hands of love and say, “Sinner, I am reconciled to you. Be you reconciled to Me.”—

*“Sprinkled now with blood, the Throne,  
Why beneath your burdens groan?  
All the wrath on Him was laid  
Justice owns the ransom paid.”*

In the case of the ancient Israelites, it was necessary that the sacrifice should be slain and be burned upon the altar. So, the Divine Victim has been slain upon Calvary. Once and for all, the Sacrifice for sin has been offered by Jesus, accepted by the Father and witnessed by the Holy Spirit. God is ready—that is to say, He is prepared—to forgive all who will believe in Jesus Christ! You think that much preparation is needed on your part, but you are greatly mistaken. All things are ready! The oxen and the fatlings are killed, the feast is spread, the servants are sent with the invitations to the banquet—all you have to do, poor Penitent, is to come and sit down and eat with thankfulness to the great Giver of the feast! The bath is filled, O black Sinner, so come and wash! The garment is woven from the top throughout, O you naked, so come and put it on! The price is paid, O you ransomed ones, so take your blood-bought liberty! All is done. “It is finished,” rings from Calvary’s summit! God is ready to forgive!

But the word, “ready,” means something more than prepared. We sometimes use the term to indicate that a thing can be easily done. We ask, “Can you do such-and-such a thing?” “Oh, yes!” you reply, “readily.” Or perhaps we remind you of a promise you have given and ask if you can carry it out. And you say, “Oh, yes! I am quite ready to fulfill my engagement.” Sinner, it is an easy thing for God to forgive you! “Indeed,” you say, “but you don’t know where I was last night.” No, and I don’t want to know. But it is easy for God to pardon anybody who is not in Hell. But you ask, “How can He do it? “He speaks and it is done! He has but to say to you, “Your sins which are many, are all forgiven,” and it is done! Pardon is an instantaneous work! Justification is rapid as a lightning flash. You may be black one moment and as white as alabaster the next! Guilty—absolved! Condemned—Acquitted! Lost—found! Dead— made alive! It takes the Lord no time to do this—He does it easily.

O Brothers and Sisters, if He could make a world with a word. If He could say, “Let there be light,” and there was light—surely, now that Christ has offered up Himself as a bleeding Sacrifice for sin, God has but to speak and the pardon is given! As soon as He says, “I will. Be you clean,” the most leprous sinner is perfectly cleansed! O Sinner, will you not offer the prayer, “Save, Lord, or I perish?” Will you not ask the Lord to forgive you? Since He can so readily forgive, will you not cry, “Jesus, save me, or I die”? Stretch forth your hand, poor trembling woman up yonder, and touch the hem of His garment and you shall be made whole, for He is ready to forgive—that is, He can do it with ease!

Again, the word, “ready,” frequently means promptly or quickly. In this sense, also, God is ready to forgive. I know that some of you imagine that you must endure months of sorrow before you can be forgiven. There is no necessity that you should wait even another hour for this great blessing! After what I have been saying concerning the experience through which others have passed, some of you may fancy that you must be for four or five years floundering about in the Slough of Despond, but there is no need for you to do that. The plan of salvation is this—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Let me give you a picture. Paul and Silas have been thrust into the inner prison at Philippi and their feet made fast in the stocks. Though they have been brutally beaten, they are singing at midnight—singing of pardon bought with blood, singing of the dying and risen Lamb of God and, as they sing— suddenly there is an earthquake. The foundations of the prison shake, the doors fly open and the jailer, fearing that his prisoners have escaped, leaps out, draws his sword and is about to kill himself! But he hears a voice crying, “Do yourself no harm! We are all here.”

He calls for a light, springs in and falls tremblingly at his prisoners’ feet and says, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” What would some of you have said in reply to that question? “Well, you must first believe the guilt of your sin more than you do at present—you had better go home and pray about the matter.” That was not Paul’s answer. He said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.” And, to prove that he was saved, the Apostle baptized him and all his, straightway, and we are expressly told that they all believed. What do you say to that, you old deacons who say, as many country deacons still do, that the young converts ought to be “summered and wintered” before they are baptized? I have known scores of good old souls in the country who have said, “We must not take Mrs. So-and-So into the church. We have not had time to prove her enough.” But the Apostle knew that as they had believed, they were fit to be baptized because they were pardoned—

*“The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in His crucified God,  
His pardon at once He receives,  
Redemption in full through His blood.”*

If the Lord wills, you may be pardoned this very moment. Jehovah needs not months and years in which to write out the charter of your forgiveness and put the great seal of Heaven to it. He can speak the word and swifter than the lightning flash, the message shall come to you, “Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.” And you shall say, “I’m forgiven—

*“‘A monument of Grace  
A sinner saved by blood!  
The streams of love I trace  
Up to the Fountain, God  
And in His sacred bosom see  
Eternal thoughts of love to me.’”*

The word, “ready,” is also frequently used to signify cheerfulness. When a person says to you, “Will you give me your help?” you say, “Oh, certainly, with readiness!” That means with cheerfulness. The Lord loves a cheerful giver and I am sure that He is, Himself, a cheerful Giver. You do not know, poor Soul, how glad God is when He forgives a soul. The angels sang when God made the world, but we do not read that He sang. Yet, in the last chapter of the prophecy of Zephaniah, we read, “The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing.” Only think of it—the Triune God singing! What a thought—the Deity bursting out into song! And what is this about? It is over His pardoned people, His blood-bought chosen ones! O Soul, you think, perhaps, that God will be hard to be entreated and that He will give His mercy grudgingly! But the mercy of the Lord is as free as the air we breathe. When the sun shines, it shines freely, otherwise it were not the sun. And when God forgives, He forgives freely, else He were not God! Never did water leap from the crystal fountain with half such freeness and generous liberality as Grace flows from the heart of God! He gives forth love, joy, peace and pardon—and He gives them as a king gives to a king! You cannot empty His treasury, for it is inexhaustible. He is not enriched by withholding, nor is He impoverished by bestowing!

Soul, you do libel Him when you think that He is unwilling to forgive you. I once had, as you now have, that hard thought of my loving Lord, that He would not forgive me. I thought He might, perhaps, do so one day, yet I could hardly think so well of Him as to believe that He would. I came to His feet very timidly and said, “Surely, He will spurn me.” I supposed that He would say to me, “Get you gone, you dog of a sinner, for you have doubted My love.” But it was not so. Ah, you should see with what a smile He received the prodigal, with what fond tenderness He clasped him to His breast, with what glad eyes He led him to His house and with what a radiant Countenance He set him by His side, at the head of the table, and said, “Let us eat, and be merry: for this My son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found.”

I would that I could write upon every heart here and engrave upon every memory those sweet words, “Ready to forgive.” Are there any of you who do not want to be forgiven? The day will come when you will want this blessing. Sailor, are you in this building? Within a little while you may be out upon the lonely sea, the waves may have swallowed up your vessel and you may be clinging to just an oar. When the waters surge around you, how gladly you will remember that God is ready to forgive— but how much better it would be to trust your soul to Him now! Some, whom I am now addressing, will probably die this week. I am not making a rash assertion—my statement is based upon the statistics of mortality. O Soul, you say that it is nothing to you now, but when you are in the article of death—and that may be before another Sabbath’s sun shall rise—how might this note ring like music in your dying ears, “Ready to forgive”!

Am I speaking to some abandoned woman who thinks that she will destroy herself? See you do it not, for God is ready to forgive! Am I addressing some man who is cast out of society as a reprobate for whom nobody cares? Soul, give not up hope, for God is ready to forgive! Though your father has shut the door against you and your mother and sister shun you because of your vices and sins, yet God is ready to forgive you if you will repent and turn from your iniquity! Turn you, turn you—‘tis a brother’s voice that entreats you to turn! By the love with which He pardoned me. By the mercy which made Him pass by my innumerable transgressions, I beg you to turn, no, more, linking my arm in yours, I say to you, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord and let us say unto Him, ‘Receive us graciously, and love us freely, so will we render unto You the calves of our lips.’” Ready to perish are you, but ready to forgive is He! Blessed be His holy name!

III. My third text is intended as a hammer to drive home the last nail. This sentence, in Job 17:1, is most solemnly true of each one of us—THE GRAVES ARE READY FOR ME.

About three years ago I gazed into the eternal world. It then pleased God to stretch me upon a bed of the most agonizing pain and my life hung in jeopardy, not merely every hour, but every moment. Eternal realities were vivid enough before my eyes, but it pleased God, for some purpose which is known to Him, to spare my life and I went to spend a little season, that I might fully recover, with a beloved friend who seemed, then, far more likely to live than I was. This day, it is his turn to lie upon the borders of the grave and mine to stand by his bedside. The grave then seemed ready for me—it now seems ready for him. As I stood talking to him this afternoon, he said with greater force than Addison, “See how a Christian can die.” When I asked him about his worldly goods and possessions, he said that he had been content to leave them all, some time ago. “And what about your wife and your little ones?” I asked. And he replied, “I have left them all with God.” “And how about eternal things?” I enquired. “Oh,” said he, “you know that God’s love is everlasting and His Grace is unchanging, so why should we fear?”

He had no doubt about his acceptance in the Beloved, or about the power of Christ to carry him through his dying moments. When I said, “The battle’s fought, the victory’s won forever,” I saw his eyes sparkle as though he heard the melodious voice of the great Captain of our salvation saying to him, “Well done! Enter into your rest.” I never saw a bride at her marriage look more happy than this man upon the eve of death. I never saw a saint more peaceful, when retiring at eventide, than he was when about to undress himself that he might stand before his God. “Ah,” he exclaimed, “remember what you said to me, ‘Sudden death, sudden glory!’” and his eyes sparkled again at the prospect of soon beholding his Lord—

*“One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks”—*  
and you are gone, O earth, and my soul is in Heaven! One gasp and you have melted, O shadowy Time, and I have come to you, you welcome substance of Eternity! Blessed be God that the graves are ready for us! Christian, does the idea of a long life charm you? Do you want to remain long in this prison? Would you cling to these rags of mortality, to this vile body, whose breath is corrupt, whose face is so often marred with weeping and upon whose eyelids hangs the shadow of death? Would you long to creep up and down this dunghill world, like some poor worm that always leaves a slimy track behind it? Or would you not rather—

*“Stretch your wings, O Soul, and fly  
Straight to yonder world of joy”?*

Were we wise, we would—  
*“Long for evening, to undress,  
That we might rest with God.”*

“The graves are ready for me.” Young men and young women, and all of you who are here, can you look upon the grave which is ready for you with as much complacency as my friend did this afternoon? O Death, you do not need to furbish up your darts, or whet your scythe! You are always ready to slaughter the sons of men. O Eternity, your gates need not to be unlocked and thrown back on their hinges with long and tedious toil, for they are always open! O world to come, you do not need long intervals to make yourself ready to receive the pilgrims who have finished their journey! You are an inn whose doors are always open—you are whose gates are never closed! Our grave is ready for us. The tree is grown that shall make our coffin—perhaps the fabric that shall make our winding sheet is already woven and they, who will carry us to our last home, are ready and waiting for us!

“The graves are ready for us.” Are we ready for the graves? Are we prepared to die—prepared to rise again—prepared to be judged—prepared to plead the blood and righteousness of Christ as our ground of acceptance before the eternal Throne of God? What is your answer, my Hearer? Do you reply, in the words I quoted at the beginning of my discourse, “Ready, yes, ready!”? Did you say Death, that I was wanted? Here I am, for you did call me! Did you say, O Heaven, that you need to receive another blood-bought one? “Ready, yes, ready!” O Christian, always keep your houses in such good order that you will always be “Ready, yes, ready!” Always keep your heart in such a state, your soul so near to Christ and your faith so fully fixed on Him, that, if you should drop dead in the street, or some Providence should take away your life, you would be able to cheerfully say, “Ready, yes, ready! Ready for you, O Death! Ready to triumph over you and to pluck away your sting! Ready for you, O Grave, for where is now your victory? Ready for you, O Heaven, for, with your wedding garment on, we are ready, yes, ready!” The Lord make us ready, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 8:1-27.**

Verse 1, 2. When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And, behold, there came a leper. You see that particular mention is made of this one special case and, in any congregation, while it may be recorded that so many people came together, the special case that will be noted by the recording angel will be that of anyone who comes to Christ with his own personal distresses and who thereby obtains relief from them—“Behold, there came a leper.”

2, 3. And worshipped Him, saying, Lord if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will; be you clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. His faith was not as strong as it might have been. There was an, “if,” in it, but still, it was genuine faith and our loving Lord fixed His eye upon the faith rather than upon the flaw that was in it. And if He sees in you, dear Friend, even a trembling faith, He will rejoice in it and bless you because of it. He will not withhold His blessing because you are not as strong in faith as you should be. Probably you would have a greater blessing if you had greater faith, but even little faith gets great blessings from Christ! The leper said to Him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” So Christ answered to the faith that he did possess, “and touched him, saying, I will; be you clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”

4-7. And Jesus said unto him, See you tell no man; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. He had not asked Christ to “come and heal him.” He wished his servant to be healed, but he considered that it was too great an honor for Christ to come to him. I am not sure, but I think that this man’s judgment is correct—that for Christ to come to a man is better than for healing to come to him. Indeed, Brothers and Sisters, all the gifts of Christ fall far short of Himself! If He will but come and abide with us, that means more than all else that He can bestow upon us.

8, 9. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof: but only speak the word and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. From his own power over his soldiers and servants, he argued that Christ must have at least equal power over all the forces of Nature and, as a centurion did not need to go and do everything himself, but gave his orders to his servant and he did it, so, surely, there could be no need for the great Commander, to whom he was speaking, to honor the sick man with His own personal Presence. He had simply to utter the command and it would be obeyed, and the centurion’s servant would be healed. Do you think this is an ingenious argument? It is so, certainly, but it is also a very plain and very forcible one. I have read or heard many ingenious arguments for unbelief and I have often wished that half the ingenuity thus vainly spent could be exercised in discovering reasons for believing—so I am pleased to notice that this commander of a hundred Roman soldiers did but argue from his own position—and so worked in his mind still greater confidence in Christ’s power to heal his sick servant. Is there not something about yourself, from which, if you would look at it in the right light, you might gather arguments concerning the power of the Lord Jesus Christ?

10. When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. “Not in Israel”—where the Light of God and the knowledge were, there was not such faith as this centurion possessed! This Roman soldier, rough by training and experience, who was more familiar with stern fighting men than with those who could instruct him concerning Christ—had more faith than Jesus had so far found “in Israel.”

11, 12. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a strange thing, yet it is continually happening, despite its strangeness, that the persons who are placed in such positions of privilege, that you naturally expect that they would become Believers, remain unbelievers, while others, who are placed at a terrible disadvantage, nevertheless often come right out from sin and right away from ignorance and become believers in Christ! Oh, that none of us who sit under the sound of the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath, might be sad illustrations of this Truth of God, while others, unaccustomed to listen to the Word, may be happy instances of the way in which the Lord still takes strangers and adopts them into His family!

13. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go your way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant was healed in the same hour. Jesus will treat all alike according to this rule—“As you have believed, so be it done unto you.” If you can believe great things of Him, you shall receive great things from Him. If you think Him good, great and mighty, you shall find Him to be so. If you can conceive greater things of Him than anyone else has ever done, you shall find Him equal to all your conceptions and your greatest faith shall be surpassed! It is a Law of His Kingdom, from which Christ never swerves—“According to your faith, be it unto you.”

14, 15. And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick of a fever, and He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose and ministered unto them. That was, perhaps, the most remarkable thing of all, for, when a fever is cured, it usually leaves great weakness behind it. Persons recovered of fever cannot immediately leave their bed and begin at once to attend to household matters! But Peter’s wife’s mother did this. Learn, therefore, that the Lord Jesus can not only take away from us the disease of sin, but all the effects of it as well! He can make the man who has been worn out in the service of Satan, to become young again in the service of the Lord. And when it seems as if we never, even if converted, could be of any use to Him, He can take away the consequences of evil habits and make us into bright and sanctified Believers. What is there that is impossible to Him? In the olden time, kings claimed to have the power of healing with a touch. That was a superstition. But this King can do it—all glory to His blessed name! May He lay His gracious hand upon many of you, for, if it could heal before it was pierced, much more can it now heal every sin-stricken soul it touches!

16-18. When the evening was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side. For He neither loved nor courted popularity, but did His utmost to shun it. It followed Him like His shadow but He always went before it. He never followed it, or sought after it—“When Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.”

19. And a certain scribe came and said unto Him, Master, I will follow You wherever You go. How bold he is with his boasting! But Jesus knows that the fastest professors are often just as fast deserters, so He tests him before He takes him into the band of His followers.

20. And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head. Christ means—“Can you follow the Son of Man when there is no reward except Himself—not even a place for your head to rest upon, or a home wherein you may find comfort? Can you cleave to Him when the lone mountainside shall be the place where He spends whole nights in prayer while the dews falls heavily upon Him? Can you follow Him then?” This is a test of love which makes many to be “found wanting.”

21, 22. And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead. It must be Christ, first, and father afterwards. We pay no disrespect to our dearest relatives and friends when we put them after Christ—that is their proper place. To put them before Christ— to prefer the creature to the Creator—is to be traitors to the King of kings. Whoever may come next, Christ must be first.

23-26. And when He was entered into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He said unto them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds; and the sea; and there was a great calm. Probably no calm is so profound as that which follows the tempest of the soul which Jesus stills by His peace-speaking word. The calm of Nature, the calm of long-continued prosperity, the calm of an easy temper—these are all deceitful and are apt to be broken by sudden and furious tempests. But, after the soul has been rent to its foundations—after the awful groundswell and the Atlantic billows of deep temptation—when Jesus gives peace, there is “a great calm.”

27. And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him? We have often marvelled in the same way, but we know that it is not any “manner of Man” alone, but it was He who was truly Man, who was also “very God of very God,” the God-Man, the Man Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and men!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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CONCERNING PRAYER  
NO. 2053

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON.**  
PREACHED AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 23, 1888.

**“Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer me.” Psalm 86:6, 7.**

WHEN I was reading this eighty-sixth Psalm, I reminded you that the title of it is “A prayer of David.” It is rightly named “A prayer,” for it is very especially filled with supplication. There are four other Psalms each called by the name Tephillah, or “prayer,” but this deserves to be distinguished from the rest and known as “the prayer of David,” even as the ninetieth Psalm is known as “the prayer of Moses.” It savors of David. The man of sincerity, of ardor, of trials, of faults and of great heart, pleads, sobs and trusts through all the verses of this Psalm.

Note one thing about this remarkable prayer of David—it is almost entirely devoid of poetry. Men use grand, studied, rapturous and poetical expressions in their praises. And they do well. Let God be praised with the noblest thoughts as well as the most charming music. But when a man comes to prayer—and that prayer is out of the depths of sorrow—he has no time or thought for poetry. He goes straight at the matter in hand and pleads with God in downright plainness of speech. You shall notice that in happy prayers, in times of joy, men use similes and metaphors and tropes and symbols and the like. But when it comes to wrestling with God in times of agony—there is no beauty of speech—parable and prose are laid aside.

The man’s language is in sackcloth and ashes. Or, better still, it stands stripped for wrestling, every superfluous word being laid aside. Then the cry is heard, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.” That is not poetry, but it is a great deal better. Throughout this Psalm David is a plaindealer, speaking with God in downright earnest. He has got his grip of the Covenant angel and he will not let him go. Men cannot study where to put their feet prettily when they are wrestling—they have to do the best they can to hold their ground and fling their antagonist. In such a prayerPsalm as this there is no studying of language—it is the pouring out of the heart as the heart boils over—the utterance of the desires as they bubble up from the sod’s deeps with an entire carelessness as to the fashion of the expression.

This ought to be a hint to you when you pray. Do not study how to arrange your words when you come before the Lord. Leave the expression to the occasion—it shall be given you in the same hour what you shall speak. When your heart is like a boiling geyser, let it steam aloft in pillars of prayer. The overflowing of the soul is the best praying in the world.

Prayers that are indistinct, inharmonious, broken, made up of sighs and cries and damped with tears—these are the prayers which win with Heaven. Prayers that you cannot pray, pleadings too big for utterance— prayers that stagger the words and break their backs and crush them down—these are the very best prayers that God ever hears.

So you say, dear Friends, that you cannot pray. You are so troubled that you cannot speak. Well, then, copy the beggars in the street. They must not beg, for that is contrary to law. But a man sits down and writes on a spade, “I am starving,” and he looks as white as a sheet. What a picture of misery! He is not begging. Not he. But the money comes dropping into the old hat. So, when you cannot pray, I believe that your silent display of utter inability is the best sort of praying. The blessing comes when we sit down before the Lord and in sheer desperation expose our spiritual need. I am not going to dwell longer upon that matter but will simply show you what was the nature of David’s prayer.

There are two things which David must have when he prays—two great things after which he strains with his whole heart. The first is personal dealings with God. Read that sixth verse—“Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer. And attend to the voice of my supplications.” And, in the second place he must have personal answers from God. He is not content to pray without prayer having some practical result. So, the seventh verse is, “In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer.”

I. First, then, David in his prayer sought, beyond all things, to have PERSONAL DEALINGS WITH GOD. To my mind that is the distinction between prayer before conversion and prayer after it. I often bring that out when I am seeing enquirers who have been religiously brought up. This is the sort of dialogue we hold—“You used to pray, did you?” “Yes, Sir. I could not have gone to sleep if I had not said my prayers.” “Was there any difference between that kind of praying and what you now practice?” The reply usually is, “Well, Sir, I do not now call the first, praying, at all. I used to say some good words that I had been taught but I did not say them to anybody. Now I speak to God and I have the feeling that He is hearing what I say and that He is present with me in my room.”

It is the realization of that second Person as really present, the consciousness of the Divine Presence, which makes prayer real. What can be the good of going through a form of prayer? Can there be any charm in a set of sentences? If you are not speaking to God, what are you doing? I should say that a prayer would do as much good repeated backwards as forwards, if it is not spoken to God. We have heard of instances of grown persons keeping on saying the prayer which their mother taught them and asking that God would bless their father and mother, after they had been dead twenty years. All sorts of absurdities, I do not doubt, have come from the long-continued and thoughtless repetition of mere words.

I am not now speaking against the use of a form of prayer if you feel that you can pray with it. But the point is that you must be speaking to God, and you must have personal dealings with the Invisible One, or else there is nothing whatever in your prayer, whether it be composed on the spot, or repeated from memory. Note well that David, while he thus sought to have dealings with God—to come to close grips with the Lord in the act of prayer—was not presumptuously bold. He perceives the condescension of such fellowship on God’s part. This may be seen in the Psalm.

If you have the Psalm open before you, kindly begin with the first line— “Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me.” As if he said, “You are so high that unless You shall stoop and stoop very low, You can not commune with me. But, Lord, do thus stoop. Bow down Your ear. From Your lofty Throne, higher than an angel’s wing can reach, stoop down and listen to me—poor, feeble me.” This is what we must have in order to true prayer. Our prayer must climb to that great ear which hears the symphonies of the perfected and the hallelujahs of cherubim and seraphim.

Is there not something very wonderful about this, that we—who are both insignificant and unworthy—should be able to speak to Him who made the stars and upholds all things by the Word of His power? Yet this is the essence of prayer—to rise in human feebleness to talk with Divine Omnipotence. In nothingness to deal with All-Sufficiency. You cannot venture upon this without the Mediator, Christ. But with the Mediator, what a wonderful fellowship a worm of the dust is permitted to enjoy with the infinite God! What condescension there is in a sinner communing with the thrice-holy Jehovah, Seek after this communion. Nothing can excel it.

As you further read in this Psalm you will notice that David, in order to obtain this high privilege, pleads his need of it. He cries, “I am poor and needy”—as much as to say, “Lord, come to me, let me have personal conversation with You, for nothing else will serve my turn. I am so poor that You alone can enrich me. I am so feeble, that You alone can sustain me. You have made me—Lord, forsake not the work of Your own hands! I, Your child, am full of wants, which You, only, can supply. Oh, deal with me in great compassion!” Virtually his plea is—

*“Do not turn away Your face,  
Mine’s an urgent, pressing case.”*

Now, is not this very encouraging—that your claim upon God should lie in your need? You cannot say to God, “Lord, look at me and commune with me, for I am somebody.” But you may say, “Lord, commune with me, for I am nobody.” You may not cry, “Lord, help me, for I can do much.” But you may cry, “Lord help me, for I can do nothing.” Your need is your most prevalent plea with God. When you are desiring to pray such a prayer as consists in closeness with God, it is great condescension on His part to draw near to you. But He will condescend to your needs and come near—because your misery needs His Presence. God will not condescend to your pride but He will bow His ear to your grief.

If you set up a claim to merit, He will turn His back upon you. But if you come to Him with a claim of necessity, which is merely a beggar’s claim when he asks for alms—an appeal to the charity of God’s sovereign love—then He will turn about and hear your prayer. Come, my Heart, are you not encouraged to come near to God, seeing He has respect to your low estate and pities your sorrows? Read on and you will find that David, in order to come into dealings with God, next pleads his personal consecration—“Preserve my soul. For I am holy.”

By this I understand him to mean that he belongs to God. That he is consecrated and dedicated to the Divine service. Should not the priest handle the golden bowl? Should not the priest enter into the holy place? And should not God, therefore, come and deal with the man who is dedicated to His use and set apart to His service? My dear Brothers and Sisters, can you say tonight that you live for God? Do you recognize that you are not your own but bought with a price? Well, there dwells an argument in that fact—a reason why the Lord God should come and take hold of you and link Himself with you. You are the vessels of His sanctuary, you are the instruments of His Divine service, you are consecrated to His honor and you may expect Him therefore, to touch you with His hand, to employ you in His work and to identify Himself with you in your circumstances and necessities.

Moreover, David, anxious to use every argument, pleads his trust— “Save Your servant that trusts in You.” This is a conquering plea—“Lord, my sole reliance is on You. Come to me, then, and justify the confidence which You Yourself have inspired.” “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” But when God has given us faith, then we may be quite sure that we do please Him. And if we please Him, then, like Enoch, who pleased Him, we shall walk with Him. You may expect, in prayer, to find God drawing near to you if in very deed you are holding to Him as the one ground of your confidence. Brethren, are you sure that you trust in God? You answer, “Yes.” Ah, then let me say to you that you shall have a reward and that reward will probably be that you will be taught to trust Him more.

That you may rise to a larger faith you will probably suffer greater troubles than you have up to now known. The reward of service is more service. A good soldier, who has fought through many battles and won many victories, shall be sent out to the wars next time his master’s forces want a captain. You, having already trusted, shall have your faith further tried in order that you may glorify God and so arrive at a greater faith. Do you not see that faith largely lies in the realization that God is and that God is near? And if you so realize God when you bow the knee in prayer you may expect to have sweet closeness with Him.

Many years ago I trusted God about many things and I found Him true. But of late I have had to take a step in advance and trust God wholly and alone in the teeth of all appearances. I have been called almost literally to stand alone in contending against error. And in this I have distinctly taken a nearer place in prayer with the God whom I serve in my spirit. It is very well to rest on God when you have other props but it is best of all to rest on Him when every prop is knocked away. To hang onto the bare arm of God is glorious dependence. And he that has once done it cannot think of ever going back to trust in men again.

“No,” says he, “I tried man once and he failed me. I had you with me and I trusted God in you. But now that you have turned from me, I will trust God alone without you—even though you now come back to the man you deserted.” Dependence upon the Lord creates a glorious independence of man. Verily, it is true, “Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” But verily, verily, it is true, “Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord.” Part of that blessedness will be found in the communion which such a man enjoys with God whenever he approaches Him in prayer.

Still, following the same line, notice that David pleads for God’s Presence because he is God’s servant. He says here, “Save Your servant.” A servant has liberty to enquire as to his master’s will and he is justified in asking to see his Lord. If he is employed upon his master’s business, he says, “I want orders. I wish to tell my master my difficulties and to seek from him a supply for those necessities which his service will bring upon me.” You feel that he has a good and sufficient plea when he urges this request. Even so, if you can honestly feel that you are spending your strength in the Lord’s service, you, also, may lawfully expect that when you draw near to Him in prayer your Master will speak to you as His servant and He that has sent you will commune with you.

David urges yet another reason why just now he should see God, namely that he is always in prayer—“I cry unto you daily.” The Lord will hear your prayer, my dear Hearer, tonight, if you never prayed before—I am quite sure of it. But I am still more sure that if you have been long in the habit of prayer, it is not possible that the Father of Mercies should cease to hear you. Oh, the sweet delights of constancy in prayer! The habit of prayer is charming—but the spirit of prayer is heavenly. Be always praying. Is that possible? Some have realized it, till the whole of the engagements of the day have been ablaze with prayer. God bring us each one into that condition!

Then we need not barely hope that He will have communion with us, for we shall be already enjoying His Presence and His fellowship. Blessed are we when prayer surrounds us like an fog. Then we are living in the Presence of God. We are continually conversing with Him. May such be our lot! May we climb to the top of the mount of communion and may we never come down from it!

David also tells the Lord that when he could not attain to the nearness he desired, yet he struggled after it and strained after it. Is not this the meaning of the expression, “Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul”? As much as if he said, “Lord, when I cannot climb the hill of fellowship, I labor to do so. If I cannot enter into Your Presence, I groan until I do so.” We ought either to be rejoicing in the Lord, or pining after Him! Ask God to make you miserable unless His conscious Presence makes you happy. Unless His love is shed abroad in your heart to be the beginning of Heaven, may you mourn His absence as a very Hell to your soul! Often I pray—

*“Oh, make my heart rejoice, or ache;  
Resolve each doubt for me—  
Lord, if it be not broken, break;  
And heal it if it be.”*

We want one of the two—either to commune with God, or else to sigh and cry till we do so. We must hunger and thirst after righteousness if we are not filled. To be in a state of content without fellowship with God would be a terrible condition, indeed.

Now, when a man’s daily cries and inward strivings are after God, he may certainly expect that God in prayer will have sweet communion with him. But again, I ask, does it not seem extraordinary that you and I, insignificant persons, who can have no claim upon the great Maker of the universe, should yet be permitted to come to His courts? Yes, even to come to Himself through Christ Jesus and speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend? Do not think that Abraham, when he stood before the Lord and pleaded with Him, as one man does with another, was singularly favored above the rest of the elect family. It was a high favor, I cannot tell you how great. But such honor have I the saints. There are occasions with all His people when the Lord brings them very near and speaks with them and they with Him—when His Presence is to them as real as the all-pervading air and they are as much rejoiced in it as in the presence of father, or wife, or child, or friend.

Still, David, conscious of the great privilege which he sought, was not content without pleading the master argument of all—he pleads the great goodness of the Lord. Read it in verse five—“For You, Lord, are good.” As much as to say—If You were not good You would never listen to me. I am, as it were, a noxious insect which a man might far sooner crush than speak with. And yet You are so good, my God, that instead of stepping on me, You lift me up and talk with me. Who thinks of an angel talking with an ant? That would be nothing.

Here is Jehovah speaking with a creature which is crushed before the moth. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. And He will show them His Covenant.” He lets an unworthy creature spill out its heart to Him and He bows his ear and listens as earnestly as if there were no other voice in Heaven to command His thought. He gives His whole attention to the feeble cry of an unworthy one. Such an amazing fact could not happen unless it were written, “For You, Lord, are good.”

Ah, but besides that, there is sin in us. I can understand the great God forgetting our littleness and bowing down to it. But for the holy God not to be held off by our sinfulness—this is a greater wonder still. But then the verse says, He is “ready to forgive.” Ah, yes! When some of us think of what we were, we must be drowned in amazement that ever we should be permitted to commune with God. Yonder is a man who could once swear at an awful rate and now God listens to his voice in prayer! Another was a Sabbath-breaker, a neglecter of the Word of God, a despiser of every holy and pure thing and yet he is now permitted to come into intimate friendship with the Most High. It is very marvelous, is it not?

Remember, none ever washed Christ’s feet except a woman that was a sinner. Our Lord selects those that have been the greatest sinners to come into the nearest communion with Himself. It may be He has raised up some Sister here—who was once a tempter of others—to become a mighty intercessor in prayer for the salvation of others. It may be that some Brother here, who once was—ah, but he is ashamed to remember what he was—has now become mighty in supplication—and, like Elijah, can open or shut the windows of Heaven. Oh, the strangeness of Almighty Grace! Let God’s name be magnified forever and ever!

Thus I have enlarged on the first thought—that in prayer it is vital to us really to speak with God. Before I leave it, I want to pass a question round the place. Do you, my dear Hearers, all pray so as to speak with God? If not, what does it mean? If you merely repeat good words, what is the use of it? You might as well stand on a hill and talk to the moon as kneel down and hurry through the Lord’s Prayer and then think that you have prayed. I tell you, you might better do the first than the second, for you would not insult God in that case—whereas you do insult Him in every one of those holy words which you use without thought, heart and faith.

Think how you would like your own child every morning to come to you and repeat a certain set of words without meaning anything thereby. You would say, “There, child, there, I have heard that often enough. Come to me no more with your empty noise.” You would not care for vain repetitions. But when your boy or girl says, “Father, I need such a thing, please give it me,” you hearken to the child’s words. It may be that you have not enough of this world’s goods to be very anxious that your children should come with large petitions. But if you were sufficiently rich, you would say, “That is right, dear child. Is there anything else you want? Tell me what it is. I will right gladly give you all things that are needful for you.”

You would wish your child’s request to be an intelligent one and then you would gladly attend to it. If your prayer does not come from your heart it will not go to God’s heart. And if it does not bring you near to God so that you are speaking to Him, you have simply wasted your breath. You have done worse than nothing, for in all likelihood you have daubed your conscience over with the notion that you have prayed and so you have even done yourself serious harm by a flattering deceit. Oh, that God would save you from being so foolish!

II. And now I come to the second point and I pray God to give me strength to speak upon it and give you Divine Grace to hear it. Not at any great length but with much earnestness I have to remind you that David, in his prayer, desired PERSONAL ANSWERS FROM GOD. When we pray, we expect God to hear us, even as David says, “In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer me.”

I must not speak for all Christians in this matter. But I may speak for myself and for many dear Brethren in the faith—and I must boldly say that we expect the Lord to hear our prayers. No, we are sure that He does so. We hear our fellow Christians say, when we tell them of instances in which God has heard our prayers, “How very extraordinary!” And we look at them and say, “Extraordinary?” Has it become an extraordinary thing for God to be true to His own Promise? I like better the remark of the good old lady, who, when her prayer was answered, was asked, “Does it not surprise you?” She said, “No, it does not surprise me. It is just like Him.”

If anyone of you had a promise from a friend that, upon your sending in a note, he would give you such-and-such a thing—if you sent the request and he fulfilled his promise, would you say, “I am greatly surprised at his action”? No, no—you believe that your friend means what he says and you look for him to keep his word. O child of God, deal with God on those terms. The wonder was that He should make the promise at all! But when He has made the promise, it is not wonderful that He should keep it—He expects you to ask and He waits to give.

A promise is like a check. If I have a check, what do I do with it? Suppose I carried it about in my pocket and said, “I do not see the use of this bit of paper, I cannot buy anything with it,” a person would say, “Have you been to the bank with it?” “No, I did not think of that.” “But it is payable to your order. Have you written your name on the back of it?” “No, I have not done that.” “And yet you are blaming the person who gave you the check? The whole blame lies with yourself. Put your name on the back of the check, go with it to the bank and you will get what is promised to you.”

A prayer should be the presentation of God’s promise endorsed by your personal faith. I hear of people praying for an hour together. I am very pleased that they can. But it is seldom that I can do so and I see no need for it. It is like a person going into a bank with a check and stopping an hour. The clerks would wonder. The common sense way is to go to the counter and show your check and take your money and go about your business. There is a style of prayer which is of this fine practical character. You so believe in God that you present the promise, obtain the blessing and go about your Master’s business.

Sometimes a flood of words only means excusing unbelief. The prayers of the Bible are nearly all short ones—they are short and strong. The exceptions are found in places of peculiar difficulty, like that of Jacob, when he cried—

*“With you all night I mean to stay,*

*And wrestle till the break of day.”*  
As a general rule, faith presents its prayer, gets its answer and goes on its way rejoicing.

We expect our God to answer our prayer all the more surely when we are in trouble. David so expected—“In the day of my trouble I will call upon You: for You will answer me.” Trouble is sent to make us pray. When we pray, the prayer becomes the solace of our trouble. And when the prayer is heard, it becomes the salvation out of our trouble. Many of you would be out of trouble quickly if you prayed. “Sir, I have been doing my best.” And what is your best? A better thing than your best is to wait upon the Lord. Often and often trial has to rap our fingers to make us let go our harmful confidences and turn to the Lord. With our vain-confidence we are like a madman with a razor—the more we grasp it, the more it cuts us.

Drop the deadly self-trust—trust in God and look to Him and your deliverance will speedily come to you. If you should have no answer at any other time, you will assuredly be heard in the time of trouble if you trust in the Lord. Now, if we expect God to answer us, we do so on very good grounds. There are certain natural reasons. I was turning over in my mind the question, “Why do I pray? Why have I any reason to believe that God hears me?” And I thought to myself,” Well, on natural grounds I have a right to believe that God will hear prayer, or otherwise why is prayer commanded?” The Scripture is full of prayer. It is an institution of the old Covenant, as well as of the new and yet it is a piece of folly if God does not hear it.

“Oh,” says somebody, “but it does you good to pray, even though there may be no such a thing as God’s hearing prayer.” It might do an idiot good to pray when he knew there was no hearing of prayer on God’s part. But not being an idiot myself, I could not perform such a stupid exercise. I would as soon sit on a five-barred gate and whistle to the hills as offer prayer if I did not hope to be heard. If there is no God that hears prayer, I shall not pray—nor will any other rational being. Show prayer to be unheard of God and you have shown it to be a folly. Show prayer to be a folly and who will pursue it? Does God invite us to pray? Does He command us to pray? Are there many injunctions of this kind—“Men ought always to pray and not to faint”? “Pray without ceasing,” and so on?

Then prayer must be heard of God. How would it be with you if you said to a number of poor people, “Come round to my gate tomorrow and I will relieve your distresses”? Would you not intend to relieve their distresses when you said so? I cannot imagine that you would be so diabolical as to keep on saying, “Come to my house. Whenever you are hungry, come to my table. Whenever you need clothes, come to my door and ask.” All the while saying to yourself, “But I do not intend to give you anything. You may come and ring the bell as long as you like. It will be fine exercise for you but I shall take no notice of your appeals.”

It would be a most shocking and disgraceful mockery of misery. God will not serve us in that fashion. The very institution of prayer gives us the assurance that God intends to hear and to answer.

Observe, again, that prayer has been universal among all the saints. There have been saints of different molds and temperaments but they have all prayed. Some of them have been, like Heman and Asaph, masters of song and they have prayed. Others could not sing but they have all prayed. Today you may meet with all sorts of Christians, holding many kinds of doctrines—but they all pray. And what is most curious, they all pray alike, too. You can scarcely detect a difference when they pray—

*“The saints in prayer appear as one,  
In word and deed and mind.”*

A man may preach doctrine contrary to the Grace of God. But get him on his knees and he prays to God for Divine Grace, as heartily as John Calvin himself. We are one at the Mercy Seat. Whatever doctrinal views we may hold—when we plead with the living God, in the power of the Holy Spirit—we are poured into one mold. How is this? If, all the ages through, saints have prayed, have they all been fools? Have they all exercised themselves in a way that was utterly useless and absurd? Do not believe it!  
Note again, that the more godly and holy a man is, the more he prays.

You never heard yet that a man began to backslide, or that a sober man became a drunkard through praying too much. Did you ever hear of a person becoming unkind to his wife, ungenerous to the poor, negligent of public worship, or guilty of grievous sin through being too much in prayer? No. The case is the reverse. As the man loves God more and becomes more like Christ, he takes greater delight in prayer. That cannot be an idle and useless exercise which the best of men have followed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

If there is a possibility of error, we err in the best of company—for yonder comes the Lord Jesus Himself from His lonely haunt with the burrs of the heather from the mountainside sticking to His garments. He has spent all night in agonizing prayer. He will not open His mouth to preach to the multitude till first of all He has received a new anointing from His Father’s hand in secret fellowship with Heaven. Our Master and His best disciples have abounded in prayer.

Well, dear Friends, these are natural reasons. And there are a great many more, if you will think them out. But, if you turn to Scriptural reasons, why was there a Mercy Seat if there is nothing in prayer? Why does the Throne of Grace still remain as a permanent institution, of which Paul says, “Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace,” unless there is a reality in it? Tell me, why is Christ the way to the Mercy Seat? Why is He Himself the great Intercessor and Mediator if there is nothing in prayer? The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities in prayer—surely there must be something effectual where He lends His aid.

What? Is He, after all, helping us to do a thing which produces no result?—helping us to present petitions which will never reach the ear of God? Tell that to the philosophers. We are not so credulous. Once more— we know that God hears prayer because we have met with multitudes of His people who can tell of answers to prayer. What is more, we are ourselves among that number. Looking back on my diary, I find it studded with answers to prayer. Often when I have talked with friends of an evening, telling them a few cases in which God has heard my cries in time of need, they have said, “Have you written these down?” “Well, no, I cannot say that I have.” “Oh,” says one, “pray do not let such facts be lost.”

I have to reply that many cases of answered prayer are quite beyond the belief of average people. I know them to be true but I do not expect others to believe my tale. When William Huntington wrote his “Bank of Faith” some people called it a “Bank of Nonsense.” I could write twenty “Banks of Faith” and every word should be as sure as an honest man could write. But the only result would be that people would say, “Oh, well, you know that is the result of the good man’s fanaticism.” The moment that the moderns do not like to believe a thing they call it fanatical. If we were put into a witness-box tomorrow, our testimony would have weight with the court. But yet, the moment we talk about God’s hearing prayer— oh, then we are romancing, and our witness is not to be received. But, Brothers and Sisters, we bear a true witness—whether men receive it or not. I solemnly declare that no fact is better proved by my experience than this—that the Lord hears the prayers of His believing people. You, each one, will know for himself, or herself, whether there is a God that hears prayer. Does He answer your petitions? Brethren, you are sure that He does and at the asking of the question you bow your heads and say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” My dear Brother, William Olney, sits here among us—have we not prayed him twice back from the gates of the grave? He lives as an instance of answered prayer. There is not a stone or a beam about this great Tabernacle but has been an answer to our prayers.

In days when, as a congregation, we were few and feeble, we ventured on the serious enterprise of building this great house and we prayed it up stone by stone, to the praise and glory of God. If we who worship beneath this dome did not believe in prayer, the stones out of the walls would cry out against us.

But I hear a voice saying, “There are so many difficulties about prayer being heard.” Are there? The farther I go in this life, the more difficulties I am informed of, though I should not have discovered them myself. I am assured that there are great difficulties about eating, breathing and sleeping. As to the very air, I do not know what it is not full of—it teems with the seeds of disease and the wonder is that we live at all. But we do live, do we not? And we shall eat our suppers tonight despite the difficulties in connection with food.

As to the difficulties connected with prayer, they are altogether philosophical difficulties and by no means practical ones. If you are philosophers, you may weary your heads about them. But if you are simple, practical people, you may pray and receive the blessing. “Yes but the power of prayer with God supposes that God may change.” Well, our doing anything supposes that, but it is a mere supposition. Your even walking home tonight might raise a difficulty as to the decrees of God. But it is a nonexistent difficulty. After you have entertained it as long as you like, you will find that you have entertained a shadow.

Suppose that you leave off supposing and just do as God tells you and see whether it does not work. When you find that it does practically work, let other people enjoy the difficulties. I do not eat meat. But if I did, I should always feel quite satisfied to let my dogs have the bones—the meat would satisfy me. If there are any difficulties about prayer, the dogs may have them—I mean the philosophers. But as for us simple Christian people—we are satisfied with the meat of the precious fact that prayer brings every blessing from above. We pray and God hears us and that is enough for us. Our God does not change His will, and yet He wills a change in answer to prayer.

I have done when I have made this further remark. I cannot expect any man to believe that he can commune with God, or that God will, in very deed, hear his prayer and grant him his desire, unless he has been led personally to try it. But if, by the Spirit of God, he has been led to seek after God and to draw near to God, I shall have no need of further arguments with him. That man has now entered upon a new life in which he will be capable of understanding new things. Until he does enter upon that life, he is spiritually deaf and blind. And what can he know about spiritual realities?

Our Lord has said to us, “You must be born again.” When we are born again, the life within turns toward the life of God and has fellowship with God and God answers it and the desire of the godly one is granted. Oh, the honor of communion with God! Happy beings who enjoy it! How unspeakable the privilege of pouring out your hearts before God! Delight yourselves therein before you fall asleep this night. Oh, the holy quietude which it brings! You have not an ounce of care to carry because all your burden is in prayer and supplication—laid on Him that cares for you!

Oh, the love that dwells in the heart of the man who draws near to God in prayer! You cannot love God at a distance. You must draw nearer and nearer, or love will not rest. As when one comes into the sunshine, he feels the warmth, so when we come nearer to God we have more joy in Him. Keep near to God. Abound in prayer. Let your supplications be instant and constant, and you will be sure that the Father Himself hears your cries!

Oh, that some here who never prayed would begin at once! Trust in Jesus, the Intercessor, and let that trust show itself by pleading the merit of His blood in earnest prayer. Oh, that you would now begin that holy life of prayer which shall lead up to the eternal life of praise at the right hand of God. Amen.

On the wing, November 19, 1888.  
DEAR FRIENDS—After reading this sermon carefully, I add these words. In all my sickness, weakness, conflict and pain, the prayer-hearing God has been with me and not one word of His promise has failed. Blessed be His name! And now I am sufficiently recovered to begin my journey to the place where I take rest and change. I go beneath a canopy of prayers. Will the reader join in asking that for the sake of my work I may soon recover strength and return to my field of service? I have more confidence in prayer than in the balmy air and the rest—means are only good when the God of Means makes them so. I leave my heart with dear ones at home and with my congregation of hearers and readers. The Lord be with you!  
Yours heartily,  
*C. H. SPURGEON.*

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THE LAST CENSUS  
NO. 382

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 14, 1861,**

**BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The Lord shall record, when He registers the people, that this man was born there.”  
Psalm 87:6.**

SEVERAL times, according to the record of Scripture, there was a census taken of the people of God. When Jacob went down into Egypt all his offspring were numbered and they were three score and ten souls. How small, then, the visible Church of Christ! It could be contained within a single tent. It had sprung of but a solitary man. All those, then, who feared Jehovah, so far as it is known to us, were of the race of Jacob.

There was another census taken when the people came up out of Egypt and if you read in the earlier chapter of the Book of Numbers you will be astonished at the wonderful multiplication which had taken place in the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. Truly, the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied. There were six hundred thousand footmen, all prepared for battle, besides women and children and aged men who were exempt from the toils of warfare.

There was another census taken after the people had been thirty-eight years in the wilderness. Through their sin they had not been multiplied. So many had fallen in the wilderness, that notwithstanding the natural increase, the population stood at very nearly the same rate, or—taking the armed men as the standard—about two thousand less than it was when they first entered into the howling wilderness. You have further on in history another instance of the taking of the census, or rather of an attempt to do it, when David commanded Joab, the captain of the host, to go through all the tribes and number the people from Dan even to Beersheba.

The people were God’s people. When He numbered them, well and good. But none but the sovereign power has a right to take the census of the people. David, forgetting that he was only God’s viceroy, that he stood not as king in Israel, except as under the constitution which God had established, presumes to invade the priestly prerogative and commit to Joab the Levitical office of numbering the people and that without offering the shekels of sanctuary or giving the tribute of redemption. So flagrant was the breach of the laws of Israel, that even Joab was quick to remonstrate.

But before David could effect the task, the Word of God had come out against him and three days of pestilence, or three years of famine, or a period of flight before their enemies, who should defeat them in war were offered to him as dread alternatives for the punishment of his sin. So did God seem to say, “Jehovah shall register the people, but David shall not.”

God shall count His redeemed and number His elect, but man shall not venture to touch the mysterious roll. None but the Lamb shall take that Book and open every seal. That Lamb’s Book of Life is not to be read except by the eyes of Him who bought the people with His blood. Nor are the people to pass under any hand to be counted except under the hand of Him that tells them, even the great Shepherd Himself.

My Brethren, according to the text, there is one day to be a great census taken of the Church of God. It is concerning that one census, final and decisive, that I shall have to speak this morning. May God grant that of all of us it may be said, when the Lord registers the people, “This man was born there.”

Concerning this writing up of the census I shall take four or five points. First, we shall notice what this writing will involve “when the Lord registers the people.” Secondly, whose names will not be found written in the census. Thirdly, whose names will be there and, fourthly, who will register the people. And then lastly, why will it be done at all?

I. When this dispensation shall come to its close, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come in the clouds of Heaven, when all His people shall be gathered to Him to share His splendors and to delight themselves in His triumph, then we believe the Lord shall register His people. WHAT WILL THIS REGISTERING OR WRITING BE?

There will be written in this census nothing but personal matters. If you note my text, it says, “This man was born there.” They are not taken in the plural—these men. They are not taken as a corporate body—this nation, this church, this family—but one by one each man’s name shall be found either written there or else left out. Personal matters alone will come into the great census of eternity. There is no truth which we need more frequently to hold up before the eyes of our people than the truth that nothing but personal godliness will ever avail.

If you could trace your pedigree through a line of saints up to the Apostles, no, up to Mary herself, the mother of our Savior, yet, unless you did yourself believe in Christ and had yourself been the subject of the personal change which is called regeneration, you should in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven. No connections, however admirable—no relations, however desirable, no proxies, however excellent—shall ever avail for any dying man. We must ourselves stand before God, each man for himself to be acquitted, or to be condemned—to hear, “Come, you blessed,” or “Depart, you cursed one.”

There may be and there always must be, when we take men in the mass, (and God often in his Providence deals with men in the mass), there may be innocent persons who suffer in the common calamity. There are likewise wicked men who rejoice in common mercies. But at the last the evil shall be unto the evil and the good shall be unto the good. The wheat shall be unmixed with chaff. The wine shall no more be mingled with the water, the gold shall not become dimmed through alloy. God’s people, each of them personally accepted and the wicked, each of them personally condemned, shall meet their final doom. See to it, Sir, each one of you, that you personally have an interest in the blood of the Lamb.

Again, you will perceive that this great census deals not merely with personal matters but with vital matters which concern a man’s birth. Here you have it that this man was born there. ‘Tis true the things we have thought and those we have done shall be mentioned at the last, but not for their own sakes. They shall be mentioned only as means of proving that we were born again, or else as evidence that regeneration had never taken place in us. The vital question which the Lord’s Great Day shall touch will be this—“Was that man ever called from darkness into marvelous light? Was that heart ever turned from stone to flesh?

“Were those eyes ever opened to the celestial light? Were those ears ever ready to listen to the Divine command? Was there a vital, radical change insomuch that old things had passed away and all things had become new? If not, in the golden roll of the Redeemed our names can have no place. When the roll is called, our names will not be mentioned and we shall stand shivering with dismay because our names are left out when God calls—“Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

Mark, once more, the matters with which the census shall have to do will be decisive. Perhaps, my Hearer, your name could not be written today among the regenerate, but there is hope yet and we trust by God’s grace before you go from here, you may have a portion among the sanctified. If we could take today the number of God’s people, at present converted, I thank God that before another hour it would be imperfect, for there would have been others added to the visibly-called of God.

But the last census shall be final. To its number none shall be added— from its multitude none subtracted. Once let that be taken and the angel shall cry in Heaven, “He that is holy let him be holy still.” And his voice shall reverberate to Hell, but other words shall he sound there—“He that is filthy let him be filthy still.” That shall be the last polling of the people. The last counting of the jewels and casting away of the counterfeits. The last bringing in of the sheep and banishment of the goats.

This makes it all-important that you and I should know today whether, “when the Lord registers the people, it shall be said that this man was born there.” Oh that we were wise to look into the future! We are so batlike, we see but so small a distance. We only see time and its trickeries, its paint, its gilt. Oh that we were wise that we understood this—that we would remember our latter end! So that come the census day when it may, we may each have our name written beneath our Lord the Lamb, in some humble place among the chosen of the Lord our God. This census, then, will involve—personal, vital, decisive matters.

II. Let us now ask—WHOSE NAMES WILL NOT BE FOUND WRITTEN WHEN THE LORD REGISTERS HIS PEOPLE? Now this is a question which no man can answer to the full. But with God’s Word before us, supposing that the characters I mention shall be at the last day what they are now, we can tell you with a decision that is infallible, whose names

will not be found there.

And first, for these are the most likely people to be deceived, the name of the hypocritical Church member will not be found there. You have entered the Church for the sake of gain or respectability. You have made a profession which is a lie. You have assumed a garb which is but the sheep’s skin while you yourself remain a wolf. You have a name to live, but are dead. You have whitewashed the sepulcher, but a sepulcher it is still. Oh Sir! It is one thing to have deceived the elder or the deacon. It is one thing to have misled and to have cajoled the minister. It is one thing to have won the respect and the esteem of the Church, but it is another thing to escape undetected from the fiery Glance which can read the secret things of the belly and before which even Hell and death are naked and unveiled.

Do not, I pray you, hope that your masquerading, your spiritual pretenses shall be of any use before Him. He shall rend your garments in pieces and you shall stand naked to be the target for all His arrows. You shall be banished to the place where the hissing, the rebuke and the reproach of all the ungodly shall descend forever and ever. I tell you, your name may be in the Church rolls without a blot and no man may have suspected you, but except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Church members, try yourselves, the oldest and the best of you, yes and do you try yourself, O preacher, lest after having preached to others, you also should be a castaway. Oh, let us never take our religion from other men’s opinions, not even from the opinion of the best of men! I would not be satisfied even with the assurance of an Apostle, if it came from his own judgment—we must have the assurance of the Holy Spirit, the witness within us that we are born of God.

Again—among the names that will not be found there we may mention the man who is a mere hearer. How many there are among you today whom we could but describe as hearers only! The ear is tickled, the mind is interested, the gaze is fixed upon the preacher. ’Tis well. God be thanked that so many are willing to listen to the Word of God. But to be a Hearer and not a Believer will involve no salvation. To have had the seed sown, but for the seed never to have taken root will never give a harvest. To have had the light shining upon sightless eyeballs will have been of no use or giving of sight. To have sat in these pews, though some of you may sit for twenty years—unless the Word is received into the heart through the grace of God—will minister rather to your damnation than to your salvation. Mark this, my Hearers, if we are not “a savor of life unto life,” we must be “a savor of death unto death.”

I know what a great many people think if they are regular Churchgoers, if they are always in their place twice on the Sunday, that is as much as can be expected of them. I tell you, Sirs, that you may make your Church-going into a sin if you go to hear a Gospel which you reject. If you rest in your Church-goings or your Chapel-goings, you have rested in a lie, you have built upon the sand and in the last Great Day if you shall cry, “We have eaten, we have drunk with You and You have taught in our streets,” He shall say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.”

There is a man yonder, too, whose name is not written and will not be found written there, unless some great change shall take place—I mean yonder young man, who in saying, “I will repent, I will seek a Savior. I would be washed in His blood.” Young man! You have said that twenty times before. You said it when you left your mother’s roof and she rejoiced in the resolution. You said it when last the fever came into the establishment and you lay sick. You said it, Sir, when last time conscience pricked you, because you had retired to rest at night and had omitted the prayer in which you had been so early trained. And you say it today. But “unstable as water you shall not excel.”

Your promise made in your own strength is but a broken reed. Your penitence is as the morning cloud and as the early dew. You are paving your road to Hell with your good intentions. Up, Sluggard! Up! Pull up those paving-stones and hurl them at the old Fiend who longs to keep you at this dreary work of making a smooth path to your destruction. Oh, my dear Friends, perhaps one of the worst of Satan’s snares is the promissory note. Under a sermon, when the sinner has been awakened, the devil gets him to say, “Well, I will think of these things by-and-by.” As you heard the other night, indifferent people are the most hopeless of all, because even when aroused, procrastination lulls them to sleep again.

If Felix had hastily said to Paul, “Paul, I hate and despise you, you are an impostor,” there had been some little hope that in his quiet mood reason might reverse the words which he had uttered. But when he said in bland tones, tones which deceived himself, though not the Apostle, “Go your way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for you,” then might you have read upon the brow of Felix with the spiritual eye these words—“This is one who knows the Truth, but follows not its dictates. His damnation is as sure as it is just.” I had infinitely rather hear, as I have sometimes heard and as we constantly do, words of abuse against the minister and language of hatred against the Gospel, than I would hear some of you who speak fair but mean foul. Those who protest but belie, whose resolutions are like bad money or forged checks which he that takes loses thereby and he that believes is deceived. Your name, Sir, unless there is something more than this, will never be found written there.

Scarcely necessary is it, I think, to say that those men and women who are living in vice and open sin and who die as they live, will never find their names written there. No drunkard shall ever reel across the golden streets. No oath of the blasphemer shall ever shock the ear of angels. No light frothy or lascivious song shall ever taint the ear of perfection. Eden is not the place for thieves. Paradise is not the spot for harlots. Men and women who die with such blots upon their character and such sins upon their souls shall find at Heaven’s gate the angels say, “There shall in no wise enter here anything that defiles.”

And you, too, you moralists, against whose character no accusation can be brought—if you never received the new heart you will be as surely shut out as the immoral. The honest tradesman who was only dishonest to his God, shall find dishonesty there to be damnable. The upright man who had no crooked ways except towards Christ and His holy Gospel shall find those crooked ways destroy his soul. The man who said he loved his neighbor but forgot his God shall find that “the wicked shall be cast into Hell with all the nations that forget God.” Oh, my dear Hearers, except you have faith in Christ, except you have the Spirit of God in you, except you repent and be converted, there is a far sterner than iron and more durable than steel which will shut you out of the place of happiness and in the number of the saints your names shall never be found.

III. We shall now turn to a more pleasing work—WHOSE NAME WILL BE FOUND THERE?  
When you made up the census paper last Monday morning, there may have been a thief in the house in the night. I suppose you did not put his name down. There may have been some person who, that night, knocked at the door and was for some short time under your roof, but who went out from you because he was not of you, for if he had been of you, doubtless he would have continued with you—I know that you did not put his name there. You recorded there the names of the inhabitants of the house, but of none beside.  
Now, then, it shall be so at the last great census-taking. Whose name shall be there? We reply, there shall be the name of every soul that ever believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, whosoever fled to the Cross for refuge, whosoever turned his tearful eye to Calvary as his hope, whosoever stretched out his finger to touch the hem of the sacred garment—these shall find their names surely there as well as the mightiest of the Prophets or the chief of the Apostles. Brethren, we will take those who think themselves most likely to be left out and we remark that there will be found there the name of the poorest.  
When this last census was taken, the paper was sent as much to the hovel of the poor in St. Giles’s, as to the palace of the rich in St. James’s. None were left out. The Act of Parliament was not passed to take a census of the rich—it was not needed that there should only be those written who paid a certain amount of tax. But as they were all subjects, the name of the beggar was recorded in the register as well as the name and title of the peer. So shall it be at the last. If you have believed in Christ, though you did never glitter on the pages of heraldry, though rags were your dress and penury your portion, yet in as fair a place as those who have worn a coronet and have yet feared God, shall you find your name. Oh, let us never imagine that because a man wears fustian, or is clothed in corduroy, he has the slightest less reason to hope that he shall be saved!  
Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen. But God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be the helm of the kingdom so that if there is an advantage either way, it is where some would dream it should least be given. But, then, as the poorest, so the weakest saint shall be found there. You did not omit the name of your daughter because with some spinal complaint she has been so long afflicted that she can scarcely sit upright. You put her name there as well as that of your stalwart son, who could boldly wield arms if it were needed to defend this country from the invader.  
And, I take it, when you wrote out the list, the infant child had a place as well as the full-grown man. You felt that the census would not be complete and your family list would not be well made out even if that infant whose voice was but a cry and whose life was but a pain, should miss his place. All were recorded there. And so, at the last, Benjamin shall be written as well as Judah, Mephibosheth as well as David. He that is lame in the feet as well as the giant in strength. Father Earnest and Mr. GreatHeart shall have their place, but Mr. Fearing and Miss Much-Afraid shall not miss their portion. Everyone of those who believed in Christ, though their faith was but as a grain of mustard seed and their spiritual life was but as the smoking flax, shall find their names written there.  
I would that I could speak out this Truth so that the cast down and the all but destroyed could lay hold upon it. Are you miserable today? Your misery does not erase your name. Have you sinned, but do you cry, “Father, have mercy upon me”? Your sin has not blotted the writing. Engraved as in eternal brass, there stands your name. The powers of darkness shall never prevail to erase the everlasting characters. Are you today so conscious of your unworthiness that you dare not look up? Are you thinking, “If I said ‘Abba, Father’ it would be presumption! If I claimed the privilege of a child, it would be arrogance”? Yet if Christ is yours, if you can stretch out your hand now and say—  
*“My soul would lay her hand  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin,”*  
you need not be afraid but that among the blood-bought you shall share your lot.  
“Ah, my soul, will you be there?” Pass the question now through this vast throng and let each soul put itself into the balances with this as the test-weight—“What do you think of Christ? Is He your only help? Do you find cleansing in His blood, healing in His wounds, life in His death, Heaven in His pains?” If so, you shall be found when the Lord registers the people and of you it shall be said, “That man was born there.”

IV. I shall now turn your attention to the next point of the subject, briefly. WHO IS TO MAKE OUT THE CENSUS PAPER?  
“The Lord shall record when He registers the people.” But why shall the Lord make out the census? The first reason is—Who else should do it? Suppose our enemies had the making out of the roll! “Oh, Lord, deliver me not over unto the will of my enemies, for false witnesses are risen up against me and such as breathe out cruelty.” I think there is none among us who would be willing to have his eternal fate decided by an evil and gain-saying world. If we could put the pen into the hand of the wicked they would write down the offscouring, but omit the jewels. They would surely record the base and the reprobate, while the chosen and precious would have no lot or portion.  
Imagine for a moment, my dear Friends, that the pen could be given to the old Pope of Rome and that he had the writing up of the people. Now, my lord Pope, with your triple crown upon your head, write them out. I am sure he would omit yours and mine because we are not obedient to the pontifical see and even if he were under authority and command, I am sure he would make a great splutter in trying to write the name, “Martin Luther,” and he would throw down his pen and utterly refuse to obey, if he had to write the glorious name of John Calvin.  
Well, thanks be to God, the pen is not in the hand of that archdeceiver, nor in that of any of our enemies, but the Lord shall make out the census Himself. Suppose now we put the pen into the hand of Bigotry—Bigotry, who lives not quite so far off as Italy—but takes up her residence in our own land and hard by our own abode. I think I see her with her face bitter as wormwood and with her eyes full of darkness and she, having written all the names down, reads—“There are few that shall be saved. They are so few that a child can count them.” She makes a dash against the name of this man, for he did not hold all the five points of a certain system. She runs her pen right through another man’s, because he dared to preach to sinners—and she takes a double dip for another, who had once ventured to say that faith was the duty of man and unbelief was a high and damning crime. Oh, how few would ever go to Heaven, if Bigotry had the making out of the census paper!  
I might thus run through the list of all the enemies of Christ’s Church and show you that it would not be safe to trust any of them, from the devil downward to the Pope upward, with the making up of the list of those who shall enter into the King’s palace. But, suppose our friends had the task. “Yes,” says one, “let my mother have the pen.” Yes, if this were left with our dear Friends, they would not be long before some of them would write in bold text hand the name of their most reprobate son, or most hardened daughter. Affection in this world overmasters the understanding—and doubtless there would be many in Heaven who would defile its purity if affection had the keeping of the gates and if understanding had no place.  
Yes, but young man, your mother cannot save you. She can pray and plead, but if your iniquity be written as with an iron pen and graven on the horns of the altar, her tears cannot—sold even though they are—eat out the dire inscription from the brass. You must be washed in blood, or else a Baptism of tears will not avail. You must have the Spirit of Christ, for your mother’s spirit cannot bear you on its wings to Heaven. Indeed, dear Friends, if the making out of the census paper were left even to ourselves, it were left to the wrong persons, for I take that the great end of all God’s dispensations is His glory and if our entrance to Heaven were left to ourselves, there are many who would go there with a bee on their lips and with blasphemy in their hearts.  
They would go to Glory fresh from their sins—rising from beds of lusts to beds of bliss. They would go red with murder, black with grime, dripping with the oozing of their vice and Heaven would become a Sodom and Paradise an Aceldama. The Throne of God would be no better than the Throne of Moloch and the place of perfection would not be preferable to Hell itself. God and God only—God the Only Wise—shall have the writing up of the people—for there is no one to be found but God who could do it.  
There is a second reason which I think will strike the spiritual mind with force. “The Lord shall record when He registers the people.” Instructions were given at the late census, that the paper should be made out by “the head of the family.” Now I suppose, though it is not always the fact, that the husband is the head of the household and that the father stands in the position of the head of the family. Well, then, the Church must not make up the census paper, for she is the spouse. But He who is Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, He by whose name the whole family in Heaven and earth are named, He shall “Register the people.”  
It were, indeed, impious for you or me—it would bring down upon our heads a penalty as heavy as that which fell on David—if we thought we could write up the people. We have said perhaps, “There are only suchand-such people that shall be saved,” and we have turned about and said of another, “Lord, what shall this man do?” And like John, loving spirit though he was, we have been ready to call fire from Heaven upon some and to say of others, “Master, forbid them, because they follow not with us.” But, Brethren I hope we have done with all that now. We believe the Lord knows them that are His. They are a multitude that no man can number and no man should ever attempt the task. They are more than bigotry would include, they are fewer than a latitudinarian charity would affirm. But be they more or be they less, they are known only to the eternal mind and this is a secret into which we must not pry. The angelic footstep treads not here. Let us not be rash and foolish to pry where angels stand back and do not desire to look.  
I would give another reason why God and God alone, should make up this paper had I not already anticipated myself. I meant to have said because He is the only wise God. You know it is said in Scripture that God is wise, but then it is added He is “Only Wise.” There is not another wise being upon the face of the earth. There is not another wise being, even in Heaven itself. God is Only Wise. Even the heathen knew this. You will remember when some fishermen had found a spoil, the old Greek legend says, “Not knowing how to divide it they repaired to the Delphic oracle, which said, ‘Let the wisest have it.’ ”  
They sent it to Thales, the Miletian. They sent it to Solon. It went the round of the wise men of Greece—but they all refused it. They said no, confessed they were not the wisest, till at last one of them advised to send it to the altar of the gods, for the gods were the wisest of all. What the heathen thus pictured in poetic fiction we know to be true. We will not question this man or that, this denomination or that. It is not for us to use our fingers to count the brands plucked from the burning but to use our hands to pluck them from the fire and we will pass the roll to the Only Wise God and He shall at the last decide whether they are His or not.  
V. I now come to my last point. May the Spirit of God bless it to us and seal it on our hearts—WHY WILL THE CENSUS BE TAKEN AT ALL?  
Why should God register the people? We answer not that God may receive fresh information. He knows all things. Not that there is any fear of God’s purposed number being incomplete. The Lord knows them that are His and this is one of the stones on which the security of the Church is built. Why then?  
Of course we are dealing now with a noble picture and you must view it as a picture, though within itself it bears a mighty fact. The Lord counts up His people, in the first place, to show His value of them. You remember that passage, “They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels,” as though the jewels had to be put each into their proper place and then the Divine eye should run along them all and say “Yes, they are made up. Those in the basket tally in number with those in the inventory. They are made up. Neither ruby, nor emerald, nor pearl is lacking. They are all there.”  
God makes up His jewels. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive how dear is the poorest Believer to the heart of his Father—dearer than the widow’s only child to her soul—dearer than the new-made bridegroom to his bride—dearer than life to those who stand in peril—dearer than honor to those who could give life rather than sacrifice their integrity. We love, but we love not as God loves. Love with us may be an abiding passion, but with God it is an all-penetrating principle.  
Of us it may be said, that we are loving, but of God, that He is Love itself. And well does the idea of counting up the loved ones set forth the esteem and value which He sets upon them and the intensity and deepseatedness of that affection which He bears towards their persons. The Lord will make up His jewels, He will count His sheep. He will remember the children of His family, to see if they are there who were written in the register of old.  
Another thought strikes us. The last census shall be taken to show to Satan his entire defeat. They are all there, Fiend of Hell. They are all there. What did you say, “I will pursue, I will overtake. I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them.” What say you now, Fiend of Hell? There is not one of them lacking! You greedy lion of the pit, have you sent one sheep? Has so much as a lamb been dragged to your infernal den? You legion hosts, who with cunning, sharpened by malice, sought to tear from the arms of Christ those whom He had sworn to save—has the Surety done His work or not? Have you defeated Him? You have nailed Him to the tree—have you broken His bones and robbed Him of His members? You took away His life—could you keep it? Do they not live because He lives? You struggled through eighteen hundred years and more.

You grappled with these poor men and women who wrestled hard with you—did you overcome one of them? You were worsted when you fought with Job in the slippery standing of a dunghill. You were defeated when you fought with David on the pinnacle of the palace top and brought him down. You won not the victory when you seemed to win it over Peter in the hall of Pilate. You were defeated not once or twice, but many thousand times in the heirs of Life, who fought with various success in time, but with sure success as time merged into eternity. Oh, all you hosts, look there and be ashamed and let the songs of the white-robed be howls to you. Let the shouts of the complete host of the redeemed sink into your ears like death-knells and re-begin your Hell, for you are defeated, you are driven down. The pride of your looks is lowered and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day!  
Yet once more, methinks the counting up of the redeemed will be performed for another reason—to let all men see that the great riddle which has distracted human intellect was no riddle but a fact—and facts are not riddles. What is the great mystery? It is that God decrees, that man acts— yet that God’s decrees and man acts tally with one another. Of old, before the sockets of the eternal hills were carved out of the enduring granite, before the peaks lifted themselves white with snow to glitter in the sun, before stars had visited the mountain summit and looked down upon a world that had fallen into sin—yes, when this world was not, when it was uncreated, sleeping in the womb of the Divine thought as yet unborn, when suns and stars and this brave universe itself had not begun to be formed—THEN in His book His chosen were all written and the members of Christ fixed and ordained!  
That book was closed and sealed. It has not been opened. Now what effect can a book, a clasped sealed book, have upon the deeds of men? “None,” you say. “None,” say I. The decree of God as such has no effect on any man. There it is. There it stands. But look! The world is all confusion. Never were the waves of the sea more wanton in their play. Man sins, rebels, revolts, revolts again. The checks of mercy hold him not, he breaks the bit, he scorns the yoke and yet despite the hardness and the freedom of man to rebel against his God, I see at last through grace omnipotent a multitude come streaming slowly in, year after year, through the golden gates and at last I hear the gate closed.  
I see it barred and how strange shall it seem as that great sealed book is now unclasped, it is found that all who were written there have come. They come as they were written-come at the hour ordained! They come in the place predestinated! They come by the means foreknown! They, come as God would have them come and thus free agency did not defeat predestination and man’s will did not thwart the eternal will! God is glorified and man free. Man—the man as he proudly calls himself—has obeyed God as truly as though he knew what was in God’s book and had studied to make the Decree of God the very rule and method of his life.  
Glorious shall it be when thus that book shall prove the mystic energy which went out from between the folded leaves—the mysterious Spirit that emanated from the eternal Throne—that unseen, unmanifested, sometimes unrecognized mysterious Power, which bowed the will and led it in silken chains, which opened up the understanding and led it from darkness into light and melted the heart and moved the spirit and won the entire man to the obedience of the Truth as it was in Jesus.  
I will say no more except this. Shall I be there? Will you be there? I cannot put the question better than in the words of that solemn hymn— *“When You, my righteous Judge, shall come To fetch Your ransomed people home  
Shall I among them stand?  
Shall such a worthless worm as I,  
Who sometimes am afraid to die,  
Be found at Your right hand?  
I love to meet among them now,  
Before Your gracious feet to bow  
Though vilest of them all—  
But can I bear the piercing thought—  
What if my name should be left out,  
When You for them shall call?  
Prevent, prevent it by Your grace;  
Be You, dear Lord, my hiding place,  
In this the accepted day—  
Your pardoning voice, O let me hear,  
To still my unbelieving fear  
Nor let me fall, I pray.  
Let me among Your saints be found,  
Whenever the archangel’s trump shall sound, To see Your smiling face;  
Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,  
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring With shouts of sovereign grace.”*  
May that be your prayer and mine. May God hear it and hear it He will, if to that prayer we add the obedience of faith. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your house.” Sinner, believe. God help you to believe this morning for His name’s sake.

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BLESSINGS TRACED TO THEIR SOURCE  
NO. 3213

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1910.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“All my springs are in You.”  
Psalm 87:7.

It does one good to think that there are such things in the world as springs bubbling up in the shady nooks. Places of sweet refreshment in this dusty earth. The mouth waters at the very thought of the palms of Elim and the wells there. If even to us fresh springs are a blessing, much more must they have been so to the Psalmist who lived in a dry and thirsty land which owed almost all its fertility to irrigation. Nothing is more precious to the Oriental than a well. And he who finds a spring of water counts himself a much happier man than he who has found a vein of precious metal. We must, therefore, transfer the thought of precious water springing up copiously, bubbling up with living force, to our spiritual condition—and then say with David, “All my springs are in You.” That is to say, we trace all the mercies we receive to their fountainhead! The Psalmist was grateful for the blessings that were conferred upon him. He did not receive them with selfish inattention but, considering them well, he found that every good gift and every perfect gift came from his God. He had learned that not only everything good around him, but everything that was within him that was good came from the same source! And discovering within himself a living power, a living well of water within his own nature, he traced that, also, to the Grace of God—and said, “All my springs are in You.”

Did he not mean, first, “ all the springs I drink of are in You”? Secondly, did he not mean, “All the springs within myself come from You”? I do not know that those two heads comprise even one-tenth of the thoughts that might arise out of our text, but then we have not time to take such a great text as this and consider it in full. We shall, therefore, just take the two series of thoughts that will spring up under those heads.

I. The first thought is, ALL THE SPRINGS I DRINK OF ARE IN YOU. To begin, he may have remembered the deep which lies under. In the benediction upon Joseph, Moses said that he was to have the blessing of the deep which couches beneath. Deep down in the earth are vast reservoirs of water and when these are tapped, they spring up and we are refreshed by them. These are symbolical of the mighty fountains of Eternal Love, the electing Grace of God, the Infinite fullness of the heart of God in His own Nature, for, “His nature and His name are Love.” When we get to the great fountains of the Infinite, Eternal, Immutable Love of the Father towards His chosen people, then, indeed, we come to the fountainhead of all the streams which make the people of God glad! There is not a blessing we receive but it may be traced to the eternal purpose of God! We may see, on every single benediction of the Covenant, the stamp of the eternal purpose and decree—  
*“The streams of love I trace  
Up to the Fountain, God.  
And in His mighty breast I see  
Eternal thoughts of love to me.”*  
Every Christian who is rightly taught, who understands the Word of God and is not afraid of the fullness of the Truth of God, will ascribe all the springs of Grace that he ever drinks of, to the eternal Fountain. God said to Job, “Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the search of the depth?” This is a mysterious subject and we cannot find these secret springs, but yet we know that they are there. We rejoice in them and bless the Lord for them!  
But, using only illustrations from Scripture, when the Psalmist said, “All my fresh springs are in You”—for that is the force of the expression he uses—may he not have thought of that Rock from which the living water leaped in the wilderness, so that all the multitude that were in the desert drank of the stream? Those who had true knowledge of God also drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them and we know that, “that Rock was Christ.” That Rock, too, was struck and, straightway it became a spring of water for all the tribes, even as our smitten Savior has now become the Spring from which all of us drink. So I may say— *“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
You my sacred Fount shall be.”*  
We find, leaping from the cleft in His side, the cleansing blood and the refreshing water, too. As I said at first, that we may trace all our blessings to electing love, I may now say with equal truthfulness, that we may trace them all to redeeming love. There is a crimson mark on every blessing of the Covenant!—  
*“There’s never a gift His hand bestows  
But cost His heart a groan.”*  
That is a most sure and precious Truth of God! As we look to our dear Lord upon the Cross and see Him also exalted in His Glory, remembering that “it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and that of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace,” we can truly say to Him, “Emmanuel, all my springs are in You.”  
We meet, in Holy Scripture, with another illustration. In the times of Abraham there were certain wells which he dug, the possession of which were disputed by the Philistines. And when Isaac afterwards had to go into Philistia, he found that the wells which Abraham had dug had been filled up by the Philistines. He therefore dug others and when the Philistines began to argue with his herdsmen, he moved on further and dug another well—and the Philistines strove again for that. He moved again, for he was a peaceful man, and found they strove for that—it seemed as if he could have no water without having to contend for it.

Sometimes the wells of which we drink are springs concerning which there is grave contention. There are some that deny the most precious Doctrines of the Gospel. There is a sound of the shooting of archers at the place of the drawing of water. And when a poor, simple child of God would come and let down his bucket and take a draught, he finds the bowman’s shaft flying past his ears! Somebody has discovered that one Doctrine is not Scriptural, and that another Doctrine is not rational, so the thirsty soul becomes afraid to drink of that well! What is worse, if there should not be any controversy about the Truth, itself, he will find a controversy in his own soul as to his right to appropriate it. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, will remind him of his faults, will tell him he can have no part or lot in the matter, or else he would not be what he is. They who are delivered from the noise of the archers in the place, of drawing water shall, bless the name of the Lord as they drink!  
And truly, Brothers and Sisters, if we did but always remember that all our mercies come from God—hat whatever logic may insist upon, it must be true that salvation is of the Lord—that whichever ism may be right, whichever side of controversy may have made an accurate statement, it must be correct that every good gift comes from “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”—then we would find that, let the enemy contest as he will, we have access to the refreshing stream! Since all the springs worth drinking are in God our Father and Christ our Redeemer, we can come to these and drink without fear, for God is ours, Christ is ours and, therefore, every Covenant blessing is ours, too! Therefore, laying aside all disputing and contention, we come and drink of these wells because they are in God and in Christ our Savior!  
We read, in the Book of Judges, of two springs of water. You often mention them in prayer. Indeed, they are a kind of proverb in the Christian Church. There were the upper springs and the nether springs. Now every child of God who judges rightly knows that the nether springs are in his God. I mean his lower comforts, his temporal mercies. What would we have of earthly good worth enjoying if God did not give it to us? If you get wealth, who gives you power to get it? And if you have health, who is it that preserves your strength of limb and the blood that still leaps within your veins? He has but to will it and you would be a paralytic, or a consumptive like so many others. Your children are spared to you—bless God for each of them, for it is He that spares them! Your husband or your wife, your brother or your sister, the joys that cluster around the hearth—all these come to you through Him. They are common mercies, we say, but we would not think them so common if we had to miss them for a while! Let us bless God and see His hand in them all, and say, “Great Father, even my nether springs are in You.”  
But when we come to the thought of the upper springs, we have no question connecting them. If we possess eternal life, God gave it to us. If we believe in Jesus, faith is not a flower that ever springs from the natural soil of man’s heart. If we have repentance unto life, it is the work of the Spirit of God. If we have been kept until now, faithful to our profession, we have nothing of which we can glory—we would have gone back from it if God had not preserved us. We have not had one single jot of anything from the first day until now, but we have derived it from the Lord’s Infinite Mercy! All our upper springs are in Him—shall we not bless His name? And while we say, “Spring up, O well,” shall we not also add, “Sing you unto it,” and bless and magnify that perennial Fountain of Mercy which perpetually flows to us? The old classical poets went to Helicon for their inspiration—they drank of that spring upon Mount Parnassus. But as for us, we will say, with that poetess of the sanctuary— *“Come, You Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Your Grace,  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise.”*  
We have no Parnassus, but we have a better Mountain—  
*“Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above!  
Praise the Mount—oh, fix me on it,  
Mount of God’s unchanging love!”*  
From this source will we derive the inspiration of our muse. Here shall we find the burden of our song. The upper and the nether springs come alike from God—yes, “All my springs are in You.”  
You may read, if you turn to the 104th Psalm, of the springs that flow into the valleys. They are the places for springs where the wild beasts come to drink, and each of them does quench his thirst. And where the birds sing among the branches. You and I have had our valley mercies. We have been humiliated, perhaps, and we have sung with the shepherd’s boy in the Valley of Humiliation—  
*“He that is down needs fear no fall.  
He that is low, no pride.  
He that is humble, ever shall  
Have God to be his Guide.”*  
We have been in the Valley of Baca and made it a well—and the rain has filled the pools. We have been in the Valley of Fellowship with Christ, walking along the cool vale of communion with our Father who is in Heaven—and behold, it has been a place of springs—of springs full of water! There is not one joy in our best and happiest time but comes from God. In our choicest moments, when we are most like our Lord and most free from the encumbrances of the earth, never, even then, have we anything good that is to be ascribed to ourselves! If it be good, it all comes from God!  
Then, we read in Isaiah, and in some other passages which I need not quote, of the streams in the desert. “In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert...I will open rivers in high places.” That is an odd place for rivers! “Rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” Do you, Beloved, remember your dry-land springs? Can you not remember when you ate of treasures hidden in the sand— when it was dark, and yet was never so much light? When you were in the land of barrenness, and yet were never so filled with plenty? When you had abounding troubles and yet never had such super abounding comforts? Oh, let us bless the Lord that our desert springs were in Him! They were in Him, or we would not have had them! Had not the Lord been with us, we would have fallen and died in the wilderness like those who came out of Egypt, whose carcasses strewed the plain!  
If you turn to the 4th Chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 49, you will read about springs that some of God’s saints drink of that are not often mentioned—the springs of Pisgah. Moses there speaks of the springs that came from the foot of Pisgah. And believe me, they are cool streams, indeed, and supply drink that goes down sweetly and makes the lips of them that sleep to speak! He who knows what Heaven is and has, by faith, viewed it—who has seen its security, its purity, its nearness to God, its revelation of the face of Christ, its communion of saints, its joy of the Lord—such an one has found the Pisgah springs to be very precious and very soul-reviving! Oh, for a draught of them now! I think some of us had such a draught at our last Prayer Meeting when we talked together, and sang the hymn that ends—  
*“A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand, I march on in haste through an enemy’s land. The road may be rough, but it cannot be long, And I’ll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”*The prospect of the coming Glory makes the Pisgah springs well up—and all of them are in our God, for there is no true hope of Heaven without Him! There would be banishment into eternal woe if it were not for His Infinite Grace!  
Thus I might continue to use the similes of Scripture, and show that whatever sort of springs there may be, they all come from the great deep of the Infinite Love of God and that all our springs are in Him.  
II. But now we come to our second point, namely, that ALL THE SPRINGS THAT ARE WITHIN US COME FROM THE SAME SOURCE.  
You know that our Savior says, concerning the man who drinks of the water that He gives, that it “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” A Christian is not a cistern that is filled and emptied, but, by God’s Grace, he becomes a living well! He is not a puppet moved with strings. He is not a machine that is wound up and goes by wheels mechanically worked—there is a living Power in him! He is a new creature in Christ Jesus, instinct with the highest form of life and that life possessed in the highest degree of freedom, for while a man is naturally a free agent, yet he is in a far superior sense a free agent when he becomes a converted soul! “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”  
Our text, then, may mean this—that all the springs of our inner life lie in God. “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Christ is your life. All the springs of life are in Him.  
And hence, next, all the springs of our secret thought and of our devotion are in Him. You cannot always think of God and worship God alike. At least if you can, and it is real devotion, I greatly envy you. I find that in my soul, there are times when I have the wings of an eagle and can mount up and, with unblinking eyes, look into the Infinite Glory and I can soar on and on in strange ecstasy and delight. At another time, I cannot rise from the ground. The chariot wheels are taken off, as in Pharaoh’s case, so that we drag heavily. Then Dr. Watts’ words seem appropriate—  
*“Our souls can neither fly nor go,  
To reach eternal joys.”*  
The preacher, too, is sometimes fertile enough and, at another time barren. Truly, the Christian’s experience is not unlike Pharaoh’s dreams. He has lean and fat cattle, withered ears, and ears rank and good come up. This is doubtless to show him that when he has sacred thoughts and devotion, they come from God. In order that he may see that, he is sometimes left to prove his own emptiness. To show that the strength of Sampson does not lie in muscle and sinew and bone, alone, his hair is shorn and when he goes forth as before, he performs no feat of strength—he is as weak as any other man. Yes, Beloved, if we have any power of thought, or sweetness of devotion in drawing near to God, all the springs lie in Him.

So is it, most certainly, with the springs of our emotions. Do you not find yourselves sometimes sweetly melted down by the power of God’s Word? Could you not, at such times, sit and weep under the thought of the death of Jesus and His unspeakable love to you? Sometimes do you not feel stirred with sacred joy, so that you could burst out with an impromptu hallelujah, or begin to sing a new song to the praise of His great love wherewith He has loved you? At other times you think about the same theme, but your heart feels no power—the same song is sung, but though your lips join in it, your heart does not go with the melody. You know it is so.  
You cannot command your own spirit—the Lord must help you. The springs of your emotions lie in His hands. If He leaves you, you are like the Arctic sea, frost-bound. But when He comes and smiles upon you, all the icebergs melt in a moment and your heart feels the warm Gulf Stream of Eternal Love flowing right through it! Then there comes the time of the blossoming of Spring and the singing of the birds—the whole heart is alive unto the Most High! The springs of your emotions, as well as of your sacred thought and devotion all lie in Him!  
And I am sure it is so with regard to the springs of all true actions. Christians are not all thought and all emotion—they are practical men and women—and seek to work for God. But did any of us ever do a good work in our own strength? We have done many works in our own strength, but were they good for anything? The Savior shall decide that question. “Without Me you can do nothing,” He says. You can bring forth fruit without Him, but your fruits are as the vines of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah. Only that is right which comes from Him. When He blesses us, our actions done for Him are accepted through Him.  
Well, Beloved, it will always be so, that our springs of holy zeal, our springs of joy, our springs of fellowship, our springs of every kind that are worth the having, all lie in Him! And it will be good if the whole Church recognizes that fact. We cannot get up a revival—it is a great pity that we should ever try to do so—for such a revival, if we seem to get it, will be very mischievous. But the Lord can send us a true revival! All our springs are in Him. We must not depend upon ministers and pray, “If Soand-So shall preach, good results will follow.” Our springs are not in these poor cisterns, they are in our God! When will the Church try to look away from the creature to the Creator? When will she purge herself of that hereditary fault of hewing out for herself, broken cisterns, and forgetting the Fountain of Livings Waters? I am persuaded, from my own experience, that the more I live upon God, alone, the more I truly live and the less I know of anything like power, or wisdom, or anything of the sort pertaining to myself, the better! The more I decrease and He increases, the more do I grow up in the Lord in all things. May we, then, each one of us, adopt this sweet motto and always say, “All my springs which are within me, as well as those of which I drink, are in my God.”  
I shall only keep you long enough to say three more things—  
The first of which is, let us look to these springs. If you do not feel up to the mark, if you are dull and heavy and have no springs in yourself, remember that they never were there! “All my springs are in You.” Do you feel empty? Well, you only feel just as you are! You feel as though there was death written upon you. Quite so, there is! Your life is in Christ! Your fullness is in Christ! Your strength is in Christ! Has it been reported to you that Christ has lost His power, that His life has declined? If it were so, you would have great cause, indeed, for weeping, but while He is the same, the well of water is the same! I know, tonight that you are like Hagar—the water is spent in the bottle. Well, it never was much of a bottle, and it leaks. Now you think, “What shall I do? All my little store is gone.” “What ails you, Hagar?” There is a well near you. Open your eyes, for God sees you and God provides for you! Christ is always the same.  
“Oh, but I think I have forgotten Him,” you say. Then remember Him. “But I fear I am not one of His people.” Well, if you are not a saint, you are a sinner—and He came to save sinners. I always find the short cut to Christ to be the best one. “Oh,” says Satan, “you are no child of God.” “No,” I say to him, “nor are you, either.” “Ah,” he says, “but you have no true experience.” “No,” I reply, “I have not, nor have you, either, but one thing I know—I am sinful and Christ has said that washing in His blood by faith, I shall be made clean. If I cannot go to Him as a saint, I will go even now as a sinner! Suppose I have been mistaken in the past, I will begin again.” Child of God, that is the only way to end the controversy. Go and stand at the foot of the Cross, again. Begin again, for all your springs are still there! Though you cannot find any springs in yourself, they are still in God!  
The next thought is this. If all my springs are in God, then let all my streams flow to God. All the rivers run into the sea because they all came from the sea. It was from the sea that the sun drew up the clouds which fed the thousand rills which fall into the rivers—and so the rivers run back to the sea. Let us do the same. What we have had from God must go to God. Even in temporals we ought to do this. I remember a story of Martin Luther’s. When certain monks complained that the income of the monastery had got very slack, he said, “Yes, and no wonder, because once they used to entertain two strangers at the monastery, the one named Date, the other named Dabitur. Give was the name of one. It shall be given was the name of the other. Now,” said Martin Luther, “you turned out, Give, and very soon God took away It shall be given, for they are brothers and they live together. If you would have Dabitur back, you must also have Date. If you would have back, It shall be given, you must also have back, Give.”  
When we are not serving God acceptably—consecrating everything to God—we lose supplies from God. In temporals, I have known men give to God by the shovelfuls—and God sent silent wagon loads by the back door—they could not send back their substance as fast as He sent it in! Jesus said, “Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom”—and many have found it so. Your mean skinflints have gone on flint-skinning until they died and have left hardly enough to be buried with respectably. While others have scattered and yet increased. If our springs are in Him even in temporal things, let the streams run back to Him. Let us not rob God! And as to spiritual things, let us give back to God the more He gives us—the faith He gives us, the spiritual strength He gives us. Let us use for Him the experience He has given us, the instruction He has given us. Let us instruct and encourage others to His Glory with what we have received! Let us lay out every talent and keep none buried in the earth. May the Lord grant to each of us Divine Grace to always say to Him, “As all my springs are in You, so all my streams shall be to You.”  
And, lastly, let us have a great deal of hope about other people, because if all the streams are in God, I have not to consider, when I go forth to do good to my fellow man, what is in them—I have to consider what is in God! When I address a sinner and say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” I do it because God tells me to do it—just as I would have said to the dry bones, “Live”—and if I do it in God’s name, being perfectly sure they cannot believe of themselves, then I am doing right, for I am exercising my own faith! It is an act of faith on the preacher’s part—and God will bless that act of faith—and many of the dry bones will live, sinners will repent and will, by His Grace, believe the Gospel!  
We must not think that our hope lies in what is in the sinner. I heard a man preach about the adaptation of the sinner to the Gospel and I thought he was very foolish, for what is there in the sinner but everything that is opposed to the Gospel, everything uncongenial, everything that would put the Gospel to death if it could?  
All the power of the Gospel lies in itself, not in the sinner—salvation comes from God, and God alone. Therefore there is no reason why I should not preach the Gospel with a hope of success in Wandsworth Prison, or in the lowest slums in London! You may distribute tracts and give warnings to the harlot and the thief with good hope of success. In fact, there are often ridges in the lowest soils, like the clearings of the backwoods in the West, which are not plowed and tilled till the goodness has gone out, as it were—to them the Gospel comes as a strange novelty. It was so in the Savior’s day. The Pharisees, who knew so much, rejected His Word, but the publicans and harlots entered into the Kingdom of Heaven before them.  
Therefore, there is nothing about the sinner to make us hesitate to preach to him because if he is dead, God can lift him up. Yes, if he is like Lazarus, dead and buried, the Voice of God can call him forth from the tomb! Yes, if he were as nothing, God makes the things that are not, to be mightier than the things that are! He can bless where all was cursed. Out of the stones of the brook He can raise up children to Abraham. Let us have great comfort, next Sunday, in going to preach, or to teach in the Sunday school, or to engage in other forms of usefulness. All the springs lie in God and if we are going to work in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water, never mind! Our springs are in God—our faith is in Him and, according to our faith, so shall it be done to us. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 34**

Verse 1 I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. What a sweet resolve! Oh, that all of us who know the Lord would make that resolve and keep it all our days—“I will bless the Lord at all times.” In dark times and bright times, as long as I live. “His praise shall continually be in my mouth”—that is the most delightful mouthful that a man can possibly have!

2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD. We do not like boasters, but we would encourage every child of God to boast in the Lord as much as he pleases!

2. The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. There is nothing that humble people dislike more than to hear others boasting—yet there is nothing that they like more than to hear anyone boast in the Lord!

3. O magnify the LORD with me. There is a sweet contagion about the praise of God. We want others to help us to spread it everywhere, so we say with David, “O magnify the Lord with me”—

3-4. And let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. There is nothing that is so effective as personal testimony to the Lord’s saving power. How often is the skill of a physician commended by the grateful testimony of the patients who have been healed by him! So, shall not the prayer-hearing God be commended by those of us who have had our prayers answered by Him? Let us not be slow to say, “I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

5. They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not  
ashamed. [See Sermon #195, Volume 4—LOOKING UNTO JESUS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “They looked unto Him”—a

whole army of them, an innumerable company—“They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” There never was a face that was ashamed of being turned Christward and Godward!

6. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of  
all his troubles. [See Sermon #2193, Volume 27—A POOR MAN’S CRY—AND WHAT CAME OF IT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Here Da

vid speaks of himself again, but he refers to himself in the third person— “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

7. The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them. The great Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, surrounds with His army the dwellings of the saints and takes care to have them in safe keeping.

8-10. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him. O fear the LORD, you His saints. For there is no need to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. [See Sermon #65, Volume 2—

LIONS LACKING BUT THE CHILDREN SATISFIED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] We are often in need because we are not seeking the Lord, but are seeking what we think we need, whereas, if we sought Him and left the supply of our needs to Him, He would supply all our need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. Christ’s command is, “Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Men think that they will not get what they want except they seek it, but if they seek God, He will give them what they really need even if He does not give them all that they want!

11. Come, you children, hearken unto me. This man of God has made his confession to the saints and now he tells it to the children. There is nothing like working on material that will last—and those who are now children will, most of them, be alive when those who are now old men are dead and gone. So David says, “Come you children, hearken unto me”—

11-13. I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is he that desires life, and loves many days; that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. There is life or death in the human tongue! There is life in the tongue that is under subjection to the will of God. There is death, there is mischief of all sorts in a wild ungoverned tongue!

14. Depart from evil, and do good. Get away from evil as far as you can—that is the negative side. Do good—that is the positive side of piety. He who obeys these two commands shall find happiness and blessing.

14. Seek peace, and pursue it. Do not be of an angry, irritable, quarrelsome frame of mind. If you do not at once find peace, seek it. And if it runs away from you, pursue it until you overtake it. Remember that it is the meek who shall inherit the earth—and that it is the peaceful spirit that is the happiest spirit.

15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. He gives them His eyes and His ears—and this means that He gives them Himself and that He is always ready to perceive their needs and to hear their cries.

16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil. He sets His face against them—and this means that He is, Himself, eternally opposed to all their wicked ways.

16, 17. To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. Not only out of some of them, but out of all of them. It is often a very long, “all.” The list of their troubles is often difficult to read through but in due time there comes a “finis,” to it written by the hand of Divine Mercy—“The Lord delivers them out of all their troubles.”

18. The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit. Not your proud spirits, not your hectoring ones, but your lowly, penitent souls are the ones that are dear to the heart of God. He is near to them and saves them.

19, 20. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken. He will have many a flesh wound, but there shall be no permanent injury to him. And even though his body were diseased, his soul would be saved.

21, 22. Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants. Great as the price is, He pays it! They are so precious to Him that He minds not what price He pays so that He may redeem the souls of His servants.

22. And none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate. Blessed be His holy name!  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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HEMAN’S SORROWFUL PSALM  
NO. 2433

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, OCTOBER 6, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1887.

**“But unto You have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer come before You.”  
Psalm 88:13.**

WHAT misery of soul some persons endure before they find peace with God! There is no need that it should be so with them—their anguish often arises from a mistake. The Gospel is very simple—it is just—“Believe and live.” He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is not condemned— he at once receives pardon, passes from death unto life—and he shall never come into condemnation. But a very large number of persons will not go the straight road to Heaven. They cannot believe that it is the right road, so they get troubled in their thoughts—tumbled up and down in their minds—as John Bunyan puts it. They go staggering over dark mountains, stumbling and falling, wounding and bruising themselves, and it is a long time before they come out into the light and joy of peace in believing. I would recommend you young people, especially, to take the straight way to salvation by trusting in Jesus just as you are. You shall, by doing so, avoid the poor pilgrim’s Slough of Despond and many other things that might trouble and burden you. But, as I know that many do go round about and so get troubled and perplexed, I am going to talk to them from these words of the Psalmist.

This good man, Heman the Ezrahite, went by this rough roundabout road that some of you have taken, and thus he found himself in terrible places. He seems to have been brought about as low as a man can be brought, but all the while there was this fact in his favor—he continued praying. He did pray. He would pray. He could not be made to leave off praying! If, by some process or other, Satan could have dragged him from the Mercy Seat, he would have had the diabolical hope of his ultimate destruction. But as long as the man kept on his knees, repeating his earnest cry to God for mercy, it was not possible that he could be destroyed! I may now be addressing some who, in the depth of their trouble, have been praying to God. Not always with a brave, believing heart, but still, with intense sincerity and earnestness—and now it has come to this pass with them—the evil spirit says, “Do not pray any more. Give it up! It is of no use. God will never hear you.” If that is your temptation, dear Friend, may the Holy Spirit come to your rescue while I talk familiarly with you in His name!

First, from this Psalm, learn how to pray. Secondly, from the Psalmist’s example, resolve to pray in your very worst case. After I have spoken upon these two points, I shall close by giving you some reasons why you will find it wise to thus pray.

I. First, then, from this Psalm, LEARN HOW TO PRAY.  
A great many people make a mistake about what prayer really is. They seem to think that it consists in repeating a form of words, but it does not. The witch of old used to mutter certain phrases and she pretended that she worked great wonders by repeating such and such words backwards! But there was no real power about her words—it was sheer superstition to believe in her incantations. I pray you, beloved Friends, do not rely upon prayer as a kind of witchcraft, for it is nothing better than witchcraft to believe that the mere utterance of certain sacred words and phrases can have any appreciable effect either upon yourselves or upon God! Prayer is the longing of the soul to hold communion with the Most High, the desire of the heart to obtain blessings at His hands. James Montgomery happily described what real prayer is when he wrote—

*“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire,  
That trembles in the breast.  
Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near.  
Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try!  
Prayer the most sublime strains that reach The Majesty on high!  
Prayer is the contrite sinners voice  
Returning from his ways  
While angels in their songs rejoice,  
And cry, ‘Behold he prays!’”*  
If you would pray aright, you will do wisely to copy the writer of this Psalm and, first, tell the Lord your case. In this Psalm, Heman makes a map of his life’s history. He puts down all the dark places through which he has traveled. He mentions his sins, his sorrows, his hopes (if he had any), his fears, his woes and so on. Now, that is real prayer—laying your case before the Lord! Go to your chamber, shut your door and tell the Lord all about yourself! Do you lack words? Well then, use no words. Tell Him all simply by the movements of your thoughts, for God can read the thoughts of men. Act as if you, like Hezekiah, were opening a letter—and spread it out before the Lord. Hide nothing from Him! It is true that you cannot hide it, for He knows all about you. But, still, do not try to conceal anything from Your God. Tell Him about your life of sin. Tell Him of your vain attempts to make yourself better. Tell Him of your many failures. Tell Him of your false hopes. Tell Him of all your blunders and mistakes and then say, “Lord, I do not, even now, fully understand my own case, but You do. Do with me according to Your own wisdom and prudence, and save Your servant, I beseech You.” That is the way to pray! This is how the Psalmist prayed. Try the same plan as soon as you get home. No, do not delay, but pray thus at once! Open your heart to God and spread your case before Him right now!  
Then, the next rule of prayer is, pray naturally. Note that the Psalmist says, “O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before You.” Children are very eloquent when they cry—you have no need to teach them the arts of oratory or of posturing when they really want a thing—they cry all over till they get it! That is truly the way to pray— when you so want the blessing that your heart and your flesh cry out to the living God! You will not need to trouble about words. Your eyes shall aid you with their liquid pleas. Your breath shall assist you as you sigh and sob. Every part of your being shall help you as you stretch out your hands to God. The best prayer is like a cry—the most natural expression of the sorrow and the need of the heart. Come like that to God! Get upstairs into that little room where no eyes but the Lord’s shall see you— and there cry to Him, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” That is the way to pray, not to repeat some pompous form which may have been useful to saints in ages gone by, but to let your very soul pour out itself like water before the Lord in the most natural way that it can find!  
But you must also notice, in the first verse, what is very essential to prayer. The Psalmist says that he cried day and night before God. This makes a wonderful difference in prayer! Praying is not whistling to the winds, it is crying before God—speaking to God! You cannot see Him, but He is there! Then tell Him your case. You cannot hear His footsteps to remind you of His Presence, but He is there, so ask for what you need— deal directly with God! Remember what Paul wrote to the Hebrews—“He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Believe that God is and that He hears prayer, and you shall find it to be so in your own experience! I challenge any man to put this matter to the test and see if he does not find it as I say. There never was one, yet, who did come thus to God and God sent him away empty! Poor trembling Soul, get to your God! If up to now your prayers have been earnest, but you have left out this one important point that you have not really prayed to Him, then begin at once in a better style. You may write a hundred letters to a friend, but you will never receive an answer to them if you do not properly direct them and mail! So, many persons forget to direct and post their prayers by really presenting them before God.  
Next, dear Friends, this Psalm will help you in prayer if you read aright its first words—“O Lord God of my salvation.” Pray with this belief fixed in your mind—that your help must come from God—and pray expecting salvation from the Lord. It is true, whether you know it or not, that you are lost—and that only God, Himself, can save you. Pray in the full belief of that fact. Go to God with this thought in your mind and this utterance out of your mouth—“O Lord, I am lost unless You help me! I am undone unless You come to my rescue! Here I am at your Mercy Seat, crying to You, Lord, save me.” Do not go to so-called priests. Do not go to ministers or to Christian friends with any idea that they can help you the turn of an ounce! Go straight away to God, applying to Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is not possible that He will turn you away! Try it and see. Some of us who were certainly as guilty as ever you can be, have tried this plan and we have found mercy and we are, therefore, all the more earnest in entreating you and all other sinners to do the same!  
Further, dear Friends, that you may pray aright, notice that the Psalmist prayed often. In the first verse he says, “I have cried day and night before You.” Further on he says, “I have called daily upon You.” I like those morning prayers of which our text speaks—“In the morning shall my prayer come before You.” I remember, as a lad, when I was seeking the Savior, getting up with the sun that I might get time to read gracious books and to seek the Lord. When I look back upon it, I can see why the Word was blessed to me when I heard the Gospel preached in that Methodist Chapel at Colchester, because I had, before that, been up many times crying to God for the blessing! There are some people here who do not know what it is like early in the morning. You never did, in your lives, see the sunrise, did you, unless you got up earlier than usual one winter’s morning? I have often proved that the early morning is the best part of the day. The dew of the morning has medicine in it to drive away many a disease. A little while, all alone in the morning, might prove to be the time in which God would meet with you—will you not try it?  
But the Psalmist says that he also prayed at night. Perhaps, when others were asleep, he stole from his couch and bowed His knee, and cried to God. When all is hushed and still—and there is, even in London, an hour of that kind, somewhere between three and four o’clock in the morning when the streets cease, for a while, their almost perpetual grind and the air is still and quiet—it is wonderful how you may be helped to pray by the silence that is round about you! O Friend, if you are not saved, I would beseech you to get up at the dead of night and cry to God for salvation! I would advise you not to go to your beds, nor to think of falling asleep till you have believed in Jesus to the saving of your soul lest you should never wake up in this world, but should awake in that state in which there is no hope, forever, for those who have died impenitent! Dear Hearts, cry often, cry continually to God until He gives you this salvation! And after that I know you will always cry to Him, for you will not be able to help it! Prayer will become your daily breath and you will pray, then, as naturally as your lungs now heave with the breath of life! But pray often, even as Heman did.  
The Psalmist tells us, also, that he prayed with weeping and mourning. Read verse nine—“My eyes mourns by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon You.” That is a blessed style of praying, when the prayers are salted with penitential tears! If your heart is breaking with repentance and sorrow for sin, you will break down the bars which shut you out of hope and peace! If you will give up your sin. If you mourn over your sin. If you sigh and cry to become gracious and holy, you shall prevail before long, for God may permit a weeping penitent to stand awhile at mercy’s door, but He can never send that penitent away empty, for it is written over that door (I can read the golden letters)—“He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” While God lives, never shall a sinner truly come to Him and yet be cast out! I say again, go and try it, go and try it, and you shall find it to be so!  
Once more, you will perhaps find prayer more successful if you follow the Psalmist’s way of praying pleadingly. Notice how he puts it in the 10th verse—“Shall the dead arise and praise You?” Plead with God! If you are in earnest, you will soon find pleas that you can use with Him. “Lord, save me! It will glorify Your Grace to save such a sinner as I am. Lord, save me, else I am lost to all eternity! Do not let me perish, Lord! Save me, O Lord, for Jesus died. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, save me.” I am going over the kind of pleas I used when I took my arguments and came before the Throne of Grace and said, “I will not go away, I will not quit the Mercy Seat except You bless me.” Surely you can find some reason why you should be saved! Look not for it in any merit of your own, else you will look where you will never find it! But look to His Free Grace and Sovereign Love—to the heart of God and to the bleeding wounds of Jesus—and say to God, “Lord, I cannot, I will not, let You go except You bless me.” If you pray in that fashion, it will not be long before the morning light of salvation will break in upon your troubled spirit!  
II. This leads me now, briefly, to speak upon my second division—from the Psalmist’s example, RESOLVE TO PRAY IN YOUR VERY WORST CASE.  
I want to go over the Psalm, again, very rapidly, to remind you of the writer’s experience. This man of God was, first,

 full of troubles. Note what he says in the third verse—“My soul is full of troubles.” Yet he prayed! When you are full of troubles, go to God with them, that is the very time when you most need to pray. “But,” you say, “Mr. Spurgeon, you do not know all that I have to think of.” No, but I do know that the more you have to think of, the more reason you have to go to God in prayer about it. That was a grand argument of Martin Luther when he said to his friend, “I have a very busy day, today. I have so much work to do that I am afraid I shall not get through it all. I must have at least three hours’ prayer, or else I shall not have time to get through all my toil.” The more work he had to do, the more prayer he felt that he needed! Is not that right? The more loads you have to drag, the more horses you need—and the more work there is to be done, the more reason is there for crying to God to help you to do it! That is not a waste of time. On the contrary, it is the best employment of time that anyone can have!  
When you are full of trouble, pray the more. “Ah,” says one, “I gave up praying, Sir, because I was in such trouble.” Foolish brother! Foolish sister! Another says, “I went down in the world till I felt that I had not any clothes fit to come in.” Clothes fit to come in? Any clothes are fit to come in if you have paid for them! “Oh!” says another, “but I was so troubled that I did not like to come.” What? Not go to the House of the Lord when you most need comfort? That is the time when you ought certainly to come! Do not, I pray you, stay away from the outward means of Grace when you are in trouble! But especially do not stay away from God, Himself, when you are tried and perplexed. When you are as full of trouble as you can be, then is the time to pray the most!  
Next, it seems that the Psalmist was ready to die—“My life draws near unto the grave.” Well, do not leave off praying because you are ready to die! Then, surely, is the time to pray more earnestly than ever— *“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,  
The Christian’s native air!  
His watchword at the gates of death—  
He enters Heaven with prayer.”*  
If you are going to die, die praying! Do not let the fear of death stop your praying, that would be folly, indeed!  
Moreover, the Psalmist had given himself up—“I am counted with them that go down into the pit.” Well now, if you have given yourself up, yet still pray. I know that you say, “Sir, I am in despair.” Well, offer one more prayer, Brother! One more prayer and if you should not get comfort, then, I will come to you and say, yet again, “One more prayer.” If you despair of everything else, yet do not despair of the mercy of God! Your extremity will be the Lord’s opportunity. Keep on praying! As long as you are out of Hell, still keep on praying, and so you shall never go there, for no praying soul can ever be cast away from the Presence of God. Keep on praying, I beseech you, even if worse comes to worse.  
I fancy that I hear you say, “Oh, but I have no strength left!” Well, then, you are just like Heman, with no strength, for he said, “I am as a man that has no strength.” Pray all the more if that is your case. If you have not strength to kneel, fall flat on your face and pray to God, but keep at it, hold on to it! If you can scarcely hold on, yet somehow or other get a grip of the Divine promise and plead for God’s mercy for the sake of Jesus—and you shall never perish!  
I do not know whether I am spreading my net widely enough, but there may be one who says, “I am forgotten.” Then listen to what Heman says—“I am like the slain that are in the grave, whom You remember no more: and they are cut off from Your hands.” Man, if you have written yourself down as lost. If you have given up all prayer. If you never open you Bible. If you have resolved never again to come to the House of God because you despair of mercy, yet, I beseech you, know that it is a lie that deceives you! There is still hope for you! Believe that Jesus still receives sinners—yes, such sinners as you are—and go to Him by believing prayer and you shall yet find mercy! There are many records of men and women who have been in despair through guilt for 20 years or even a longer period and then have been Divinely delivered!  
I remember one case, that of Mr. Timothy Rogers, who was 28 years in despair and yet came out to light and liberty—and wrote a wonderful book on trouble of mind which has been a comfort to many other afflicted souls. Do not despair even if Satan seems to have gripped you and to be dragging you down to the bottomless pit! As long as you yet live, the Gospel woos you and entreats you to believe in Jesus Christ, for there is yet room in the heart of God and in the love of God for such a sinner as you are! I pray you, do not cease to cry unto God! Still continue calling upon Him till He gives you a comforting answer!  
Perhaps you say, “I feel the wrath of God so heavily.” What if you do? Go and plead the mercy of God in Christ and, as Christ, in the place of sinners, bore His Father’s wrath, go and rest in that great vicarious Sacrifice! “But I have nobody to speak to,” says another. Never mind if you have not—that is all the more reason why you should pray to God and plead with God who will not leave you. “But I am distracted,” says another. Yes, and you will be distracted, and I should not wonder if you went out of your mind unless you go to God as you are, and implore Him to look at your distractions and to lay His gentle hand upon you and restore you to yourself—and then to restore you to Himself. I wish I knew how to plead with each one of you personally. I feel that I want to go down these stairs, and round these galleries, and to pick out men and women who are being tempted not to pray, again, and to give each of them a brotherly grip of the hand and to say, “Do not cease to plead for your life! Do not cease to look to Jesus on the Cross! Hope in Him! It is Satan’s desire to ruin you by leading you to despair! Take heart of hope and believe that Mercy’s gate is still open to you! Come, and welcome, and you shall in no wise be cast out.”  
III. Now I finish with A FEW REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD KEEP ON PRAYING and why you should add to your prayer a simple confidence in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
This is the first reason. Suppose, dear Friend—and I do not like even to suppose such a thing—but, for the sake of argument, suppose that what your despair says is true—that you will perish? Then you cannot lose anything by prayer, can you? Remember what we sang a few minutes ago—  
*“I can but perish if I go.  
I am resolved to try,  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die.”*  
I repeat that you cannot lose anything by prayer. “Oh,” I have said to myself, when broken down under a sense of sin, “God cannot be angry with me for crying to Him for mercy! Surely that cannot be an increase of my guilt—that I dare to say, ‘Lord, forgive me.’ The worst criminal before a judge may at least beg for mercy, so I will put in my plea—in broken words and with many tears. I cannot lose anything by praying and, therefore, I will certainly continue to pray unto the Lord.”  
Moreover, dear Friends, it is not so great a thing, after all, to have to continue to ask. It is not so hard a thing for me to be made to wait a little while. As a sinner I kept God waiting for me long enough, yes, far too long! He called, but I would not come—what wonder if now He keeps me waiting? Shall I be in a pet and say, “I will wait no longer”? Oh, the many sermons I have heard and thrown on one side! Oh, the many times the Spirit of God has touched my conscience and I have resisted His strivings! Ought I, therefore, to be at all surprised if now He should say to me, “You must wait a bit at Mercy’s gate, for I will have you knock, and knock, and knock again before I let you in”? Oh, no, it is not so hard a thing, and it will pay me for waiting! When He does but open the gate, I shall think very little of the many prayers and tears that I have offered to Him—I shall be so overjoyed to get inside that I shall bless Him for keeping me waiting! Therefore, my Soul, press on!  
Keep on praying, for what if He should, after all, hear you? O poor Heart, what if, after all, your sin should be forgiven you and you should become a child of God? O you forlorn one, what if the light of Heaven should yet shine in upon your heart and all the bells of holy joy should ring within your spirit? What if it should be so? And it will be so if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! It may be that you are within an inch of salvation even now. Let me tell you, if you are but looking to Jesus, you already have salvation! One trustful glance at Him upon the Cross and you are saved, saved now, and saved forever! God grant that it may be so with you!  
At any rate, cease not to pray, for He to whom you pray is a gracious God. The widow who went to the unjust judge was importunate and prevailed with him, unjust as he was. But you are pleading with a loving God who gave His Son to die for sinners! Take good heart—you will not plead in vain, for He loves to hear your prayers. He must, He will answer you, for He is a God of Grace!  
Besides, if He does not save you, will He be a gainer by it? And if He does save you, will He be a loser by it? Oh, no, dear Heart! If He will save you, it will increase His honor and His Glory. Why, you yourself will tell everybody what a good God He is, will you not? And your friends and your neighbors, when they see you saved, such a sinner as you are, will begin to say to one another, “Here is a wonder of Grace! Look what God has done for this man. Let us come and seek Him, too.” It is not to God’s disadvantage to save you, now that Christ has died. Therefore, take heart and be of good courage.  
Moreover, He has heard others. He who speaks to you, now boldly tells you that God heard him. “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears! This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.” Come along with you, whoever you are. I am sure you can pray as well as I did when first I sought His face. I am sure you know about as much of the Gospel as I did when I first looked to Him, for I did not really know the Truth of God till I heard that word, “Look! Look! Look!” That is about all I know even now! I look at Jesus and He looks at me! I am looking to Jesus, and I am lightened of all my burden! That is the whole story. Look to Him and you shall be lightened, too! If others have been saved, why should you not be saved? Therefore, pluck up heart and still cry mightily and believingly to Him!

More than that, the Lord has promised to hear you. Listen, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” Here is another precious promise, “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That is a big, “whoever”! Let me repeat that text. “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The Lord does hear prayer! Do not let any unbelief upon that point linger any longer in your heart! He will hear you, now, sitting in your pew. Try it! Try it! If you have been praying for months and yet no peaceable answer has come to you, resolve this moment that you will never cease your entreaties until He grants you the desire of your heart!  
I am looking upon many young men and women here—how I wish that they would all look to Jesus even now! Oh, that at least some of you, dear young Friends, might begin to be Christians from this very hour! The harvest is past, the summer is well-near ended and you are not saved! Before the leaves fall from the trees, yield yourselves to Jesus! There are some boys and girls here—the Lord grant that they may, while they are yet children, trust in Jesus and be saved! But the most of you are men and women in middle life and many, very many of you, are aged people. Have you found Christ, dear Friend? Are there any of you old folks who are without Christ? I cannot make you out—gray-headed and yet unconverted? What is to become of you? In the order of nature, you must soon die. The young may die, but the old MUST. Oh, that you would not rest in your declining years till all is right for eternity! You know what accidents are constantly occurring and how suddenly men pass into eternity! A man has heart disease and without a moment’s warning he is hurried before his Maker’s bar! Prepare to meet your God and do so by believing in Him whom God has set forth to be the Savior of men, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”  
God bless you, dear Hearers! We shall never, all of us, meet again on earth—that is not possible among these thousands from all quarters of the globe—but may the sincere penitent prayer of all the unsaved among us be so heard that we may all meet in Heaven! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 88.**

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahaloth Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. I think that this is the darkest of all the Psalms—it has hardly a spot of light in it. The only bright words that I know of are in the first verse. The rest of the Psalm is very dark and very dreary. Why, then, am I going to read it? Because, it may be there is some poor heart, here, that is very heavy. You cannot proclaim of this great crowd how many sorrowing and burdened spirits there may be among us, but there may be a dozen or two of persons who are driven almost to despair. My dear Friend, if this is your case, I want you to know that somebody else has been just where you are. Remember how the shipwrecked man upon the lonely island all of a sudden came upon the footprints of another human being? So here, on the lone island of despondency, you shall be able to trace the footprints of another who has been there before you. Hear how he prays.

Verse 1. O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before You. It was only a cry, a cry as of an animal in pain, or, at best, the cry as of a child that has lost its mother. “I have cried day and night before You.”

2. Let my prayer come before You. “Give me an audience, O Lord. Do not shut the door in my face. My prayer has been knocking, knocking, knocking, at Your gate! Open it. ‘Let my prayer come before You.’”

2. Incline Your ear unto my cry. “Stoop down to me out of Heaven, O Lord. Bow that ear of Yours to hear even my feeble and unworthy cry. I know that I do not deserve it. I know that it will be a great act of condescension on Your part, but do ‘incline Your ear unto my cry.’”

3. For my soul is full of troubles. “Full of troubles, brimming over with grief, and every drop of it is as bitter as gall.”  
3, 4. And my life draws near unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit. “They put me down as a dead man. They that see the lines of fierce despair upon my face reckon that I cannot live long. ‘I am counted with them that go down into the pit.’” These were his pleas in crying unto God—  
**“Distresses round me thicken,  
My life draws near the grave!  
Descend, O Lord, to quicken,  
Descend, my soul to save!”**  
4. I am as a man that has no strength. Here is one, in the time of manhood, when he should be strongest, who yet says, “I am as a man that has no strength.” This subject may not interest some of you, just now, but it is here, so we must mention it. And it may be needed even by you, one of these days. Bright eyes are not always bright and the earthly joy that leaps and dances does not abide forever! The day may come when you will turn to this Psalm with the two eights in it and find comfort in it because it describes your case, also.  
5. Free among the dead—A freeman of the sepulcher, at home at death’s dark door. “Free among the dead,”  
5. Like the slain that lie in the grave whom You remember no more: and they are cut off from Your hand. This is, perhaps, the most awful depth of the whole Psalm. The writer bemoaned that he was not remembered, even, by God, any more, and that he was cut off from God’s hand. At least, so he thought.  
6, 7. You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Your wrath lies hard upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah. Very properly here comes a, “Selah.” Such a strain upon the harp strings had put them all out of tune! So the players had notice to retune their harps and the singers were bid to lift up the strain of their song. It seems to me as if the writer, here, lifted his head above the waves of the tempestuous sea and still kept on swimming.  
8. You have put away my acquaintance far from me. You have made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. This is the utterance of a soul imprisoned in solitary confinement with nobody able to come to it to breathe out consolation. “You have put away my acquaintance far from me. They cannot come to me and I am shut up, and I cannot come forth to them.”  
9. My eyes mourn by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon You, I have stretched out my hands unto You. Now hear how the Psalmist pleads with the Lord! Prayer is always best when it rises to pleading. The man who understands the sacred art of prayer becomes a special pleader with God!

10. Will You show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Selah. “Shall the dead arise and praise You?” Not in this life, though the godly will praise the Lord in the world to come. But now, when a Christian dies, God loses a chorister from the choirs of earth— there is one less to sing His praises here—and the Psalmist, therefore, pleads, “Lord, if I live, You can show Your wonders to me; but will You show Your wonders to the dead? If I am alive, I can praise You; but shall the dead arise and praise You?”

11, 12. Shall Your loving kindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? He pleads that if he dies, he shall not be able to proclaim the mercy of the Lord! God will lose a singer from His earthly choir, a witness from His earthly courts, a testifier of His loving kindness, faithfulness and righteousness.

13. But unto You have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer come before You. “I will be up before You come to me. I will be first to approach You. I will salute the rising sun with my rising prayer.”

14. LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? Note again the earnestness of the Psalmist’s pleadings. We have had many of them already—each verse has, I think, had at least two pleadings in it. If You would be heard by God, take care that you reason with Him and press your arguments with the Most High. He delights in this exercise of persevering supplication which will take no denial.

15-18. I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer Your terrors, I am distracted. Your fierce wrath goes over me. Your terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend have You put far from me and my acquaintance into darkness. There the Psalm ends. It is a sorrowful wail and it comes to a close when you do not expect it to finish. It really has no finish to it, as when men wind up their songs with proper finales—it is broken off like a lily snapped at the stalk. I have read you this 88th Psalm as an example of persevering prayer. The man who wrote it— “Heman the Ezrahite”—kept on praying even when he did not seem to be heard and thus he is a pattern to us. Yet notice how the next Psalm begins—“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.” It is not always the sorrowful sackbut that is to be in our hands—we can play the joyous harp as well! “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.” “I will never leave off praising Him.” “With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.”

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FOR THE TROUBLED  
NO. 1090

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 12, 1873, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

**“Your wrath lies hard upon me, and You have  
afflicted me with all Your waves.”  
Psalm 88:7.**

IT is the business of a shepherd not only to look after the happy ones among the sheep, but to seek after the sick of the flock and to lay himself out right earnestly for their comfort and succor. I feel, therefore, that I do rightly when I, this morning, make it my special business to speak to such as are in trouble. Those of you who are happy and rejoicing in God, full of faith and assurance, can very well spare a discourse for your weaker Brothers and Sisters—you can be even glad and thankful to go without your portion that those who are depressed in spirit may receive a double measure of the wine of consolation.

Moreover, I am not sure that even the most joyous Christian is any the worse for remembering the days of darkness which are stealing on apace, “for they are many.” Just as the memories of our dying friends come over us like a cloud and “dampen our brainless ardors,” so will the recollection that there are tribulations and afflictions in the world dampen our rejoicing and prevent its degenerating into an idolatry of the things of time and sense. It is better, for many reasons, to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting—the quassia cup has virtues in it which the wine cup never knew—wet your lips with it, young man, it will work you no ill. It may be, O you who are today brimming with happiness, that a little store of sacred cautions and consolations may prove no sore to you, but may, by-and-by, stand you in good stead.

This morning’s discourse upon sorrow may suggest a few thoughts to you which, being treasured up, shall ripen like summer fruit and mellow by the time your winter shall come round. But to our work. It is clear to all those who read the narratives of Scripture, or are acquainted with good men, that the best of God’s servants may be brought into the very lowest estate. There is no promise of present prosperity appointed to true religion so as to exclude adversity from Believer’s lives. As men, the people of God share the common lot of men and what is that but trouble? Yes, there are some sorrows which are peculiar to Christians—some extra griefs of which they partake because they are Believers. But these are more than balanced by those peculiar and bitter troubles which belong to the ungodly and are engendered by their transgressions, from which the Christian is delivered.

From the passage which is open before us we learn that sons of God may be brought so low as to write and sing Psalms which are sorrowful throughout and have no fitting accompaniment but sighs and groans. They do not often do so—their songs are generally like those of David which, if they begin in the dust, mount into the clear heavens before long. But sometimes, I say, saints are forced to sing such dolorous ditties that from beginning to end there is not one note of joy. Yet even in their dreariest winter night the saints have an aurora in their sky and in this 88th Psalm, the dreariest of all Psalms, there is a faint gleam in the first verse, like a star-ray falling upon its threshold—“O Jehovah, God of my salvation.”

Heman retained his hold upon his God. It is not all darkness in a heart which can cry, “My God,” and the child of God, however low he may sink, still keeps hold upon his God. “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him,” is the resolution of his soul. Jehovah smites me, but He is my God. He frowns upon me, but He is my God. He tramples me into the very dust and lays me in the lowest pit, as among the dead, yet still He is my God and such will I call Him till I die. Even when He leaves me I will cry, “my God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” Moreover, the Believer, in his worst time, still continues to pray, and prays, perhaps, the more vigorously because of his sorrows. God’s red flags drive His children not from Him, but to Him. Our griefs are waves which wash us to the Rock.

This Psalm is full of prayer. It is as much sweetened with supplication as it is salted with sorrow. It weeps like Niobe, but it is on bended knees and from uplifted eyes. Now, while a man can pray he is never far from light—he is at the window, though, perhaps, as yet the curtains are not drawn aside. The man who can pray has the clue in his hand by which to escape from the labyrinth of affliction. Like the trees in winter, we may say of the praying man, when his heart is greatly troubled, “his substance is in him, though he has lost his leaves.” Prayer is the soul’s breath and if it breathes it lives and, living it will gather strength again. A man must have true and eternal life within him while he can continue, still, to pray, and while there is such life there is assured hope

Still, the best child of God may be the greatest sufferer and his sufferings may appear to be crushing, killing and overwhelming. They may also be so very protracted as to attend him all his days and their bitterness may be intense—all of which and much more this mournful Psalm teaches us. Let us, in pursuit of our subject, first give an exposition of the text. And then a brief exposition of the benefits of trouble.

I. I will endeavor, in a few observations, to EXPOUND THE TEXT. In the first place, its strong language suggests the remark that tried saints are very prone to overrate their afflictions. I believe we all err in that direction and are far too apt to say, “I am the man that has seen affliction.” The inspired man of God, who wrote our text, was touched with this common infirmity for he overstates his case. Read his words—“Your wrath lies hard upon me.” I have no doubt Heman meant wrath in its worst sense. He believed that God was really angry with him and wrathful with him, even as He is with the ungodly, but that was not true. As we shall have to show, by-and-by, there is a very grave difference between the anger of God with His children and the anger of God with His enemies.

And we do not think Heman sufficiently discerned that difference, even as we are afraid that many of God’s children even now forget it—and therefore fear that the Lord is punishing them according to strict justice— and smiting them as though He were their executioner. Ah, if poor bewildered Believers could but see it, they would learn that the very thing which they call wrath is only love, in its own wise manner, seeking their highest good! Besides, the Psalmist says, “Your wrath lies hard upon me.” Ah, if Heman had known what it was to have God’s wrath lie hard on him, he would have withdrawn those words, for all the wrath that any man ever feels in this life is but as a laying on of God’s little finger!

It is in the world to come that the wrath of God lies heavy on men. Then, when God puts forth His hand and presses with Omnipotence upon soul and body to destroy them forever in Hell, the ruined nature feels in its never-ending destruction what the power of God’s anger really is! Here the really sore pressure of wrath is not known and especially not known by a child of God. It is too strong a speech if we weigh it in the scales of sober truth. It outruns the fact, even though it were the most sorrowful living man that uttered it. Then Heman adds, “You have afflicted me with all Your waves,” as though he were a wreck with the sea breaking over him and the whole ocean—and all the oceans were running full against him as the only object of their fury.

His boat has been driven on shore and all the breakers are rolling over him. One after another they leap upon him like wild beasts, hungry as wolves, eager as lions to devour him—it seemed to him that no wave turned aside, no billow spent its force elsewhere—but all the long line of breakers roared upon him, as the sole object of their wrath. But it was not so. All God’s waves have broken over no man, save only the Son of Man! There are still some troubles which we have been spared, some woes unknown to us. Have we suffered all the diseases which flesh is heir to? Are there not modes of pain from which our bodies have escaped? Are there not, also, some mental pangs which have not wrung our spirit? And what if we seem to have traversed the entire circle of bodily and mental misery, yet in our homes, households, or friendships we have surely some comfort left and therefore from some rough billow we are screened. All God’s waves had not gone over you, O Heman! The woes of Job and Jeremiah were not yours.

Among the living none can literally know what all God’s waves would be. They know, who are condemned to feel the blasts of His indignation! They know in the land of darkness and of everlasting hurricane! They know what all God’s waves and billows are—but we know not. The metaphor is good and admirable, and correct enough poetically, but as a

statement of fact it is strained. We are all apt to exaggerate our grief—I say this as a general fact. Those who are happy can bear to be told, but I would not vex the sick man with it while he is enduring the weight of his affliction. If he can calmly accept the suggestion of his own accord, it may do him good, but it would be cruel to throw it at him. True as it is, I should not like to whisper it in any sufferer’s ear because it would not console, but grieve him.

I have often marveled at the strange comfort persons offer you when they say, “Ah, there are others who suffer more than you do.” Am I a demon, then? Am I expected to rejoice at the news of other people’s miseries? Far otherwise! I am pained to think there should be sharper smarts than mine and my sympathy increases my own woe. I can conceive of a Fiend in torment finding solace in the belief that others are tortured with a yet fiercer flame, but surely such diabolical comfort should not be offered to Christian men! It shows our deep depravity of heart, that we can decoct comfort out of the miseries of others—and yet I am afraid we rightly judge human nature when we offer it water from that putrid well.

There is, however, a form of comfort akin to it, but of far more legitimate origin—a consolation honorable and Divine. There was ONE upon whom God’s wrath pressed very sorely. There was ONE who was, in truth, afflicted with all God’s waves. That One is our brother, a Man like ourselves, the dearest lover of our souls. And because He has known and suffered all this, He can sympathize with us, this morning, in whatever tribulation may beat upon us. His passion is all over now but not His compassion. He has borne the indignation of God and turned it all away from us—the waves have lost their fury and spent their force on Him—and now He sits above the floods, yes, He sits King forever and ever! As we think of Him, the Crucified, our souls may not only derive consolation from His sympathy and powerful succor, but we may learn to look upon our trials with a calmer eye and judge them more according to the true standard. In the Presence of Christ’s Cross our own crosses are less colossal. Our thorns in the flesh are as nothing when laid side by side with the nails and spear.

But, secondly, let us remark that saints do well to trace all their trials to their God. Heman did so in the text—“Your wrath lies hard upon me, You have afflicted me with all Your waves.” He traces all his adversity to the Lord his God. It is God’s wrath. They are God’s waves that afflict him and God makes them afflict him. Child of God, never forget this—all that you are suffering of any sort, or kind, comes to you from the Divine hand! Truly, you say, “my affliction arises from wicked men,” yet remember that there is a predestination which, without soiling the fingers of the Infinitely Holy, nevertheless rules the motions of evil men as well as of holy angels. It were a dreary thing for us if there were no appointments of God’s Providence which concerned the ungodly—then the great mass of mankind would be entirely left to chance—and the godly might be crushed by them without hope.

The Lord, without interfering with the freedom of their wills, rules and overrules, so that the ungodly are as a rod in His hand with which He wisely scourges His children. Perhaps you will say that your trials have arisen not from the sins of others, but from your own sins. Even then I would have you penitently trace them still to God. What though the trouble springs out of the sin, yet it is God that has pointed the sorrow to follow the transgression—to act as a remedial agency for your spirit. Look not at the second cause, or, looking at it with deep regret, turn your eyes chiefly to your heavenly Father and, “hear you the rod and who has appointed it.”

The Lord sends upon us the evil as well as the good of this mortal life! His is the sun that cheers and the frost that chills! His the deep calm and His the fierce tornado. To dwell on second causes is frequently frivolous, a sort of solemn trifling. Men say of each affliction, “It might have been prevented if such-and-such had occurred. Perhaps if another physician had been called in the dear child’s life had still been spared. Possibly if I had moved in such a direction in business I might not have been a loser.” Who is to judge of what might have been? In endless conjectures we are lost and, cruel to ourselves, we gather material for unnecessary griefs.

Matters happened not so—then why conjecture what would have been had things been different? It is folly! You did your best and it did not answer—why rebel? To fix the eyes upon the second cause will irritate the mind. We grow indignant with the more immediate agent of our grief and so fail to submit ourselves to God. If you strike a dog he will snap at the staff which hurts him, as if it were to blame. How doggish we sometimes are, when God is smiting us we are snarling at His rod! Brothers and Sisters, forgive the man who injured you—his was the sin, forgive it, as you hope to be forgiven—but yours is the chastisement and it comes from God, therefore endure it and ask Grace to profit you by it. The more we get away from intermediate agents the better, for when we reach to God, Grace will make submission easy. When we know “it is the Lord,” we readily cry, “let Him do what seems good to Him.”

As long as I trace my pain to accident, my bereavement to mistake, my loss to another’s wrong, my discomfort to an enemy and so on, I am of the earth, earthy—and shall break my teeth with gravel! But when I rise to my God and see His hand at work, I grow calm, I have not a word of repining, “I open not my mouth because You did it.” David preferred to fall into the hands of God—and every Believer knows that he feels safest and happiest when he recognizes that he is in the Divine hands. Quibbling with man is poor work, but pleading with God brings help and comfort. “Cast your burden on the Lord” is a precept which will be easy to practice when you see that the burden came originally from God.

But now, thirdly, afflicted children of God do well to have a keen eye to the wrath that mingles with their troubles. “Your wrath lies hard upon me.” There is Heman’s first point. He does not mention the waves of affliction till he has first spoken of the wrath. We should labor to discover what the Lord means by smiting us—what He purposes by the chastisement— and how far we can answer that purpose. We must use a keen eye clearly to distinguish things. There is an anger and an anger, a wrath and a wrath. God is never angry with His children in one sense, but He is in another. As men, we have all of us disobeyed the Laws of God and God stands in relationship to all of us as a Judge. As a Judge, He must execute upon us the penalties of His Law and He must, from the necessity of His Nature, be angry with us for having broken that Law. That concerns all the human race.

But the moment a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ his offenses are his offenses no longer—they are laid upon Christ Jesus, the Substitute—and the anger goes with the sin. The anger of God towards the sins of Believers has spent itself upon Christ. Christ has been punished in their place. The punishment due their sin has been borne by Jesus Christ. God forbid that the Judge of all the earth should ever be unjust—it were not just for God to punish a Believer for a sin which has been already laid upon Jesus Christ. Therefore the Believer is altogether free from all liability to suffer the judicial anger of God and all risk of receiving a punitive sentence from the Most High. The man is absolved—shall he be judged again? The man has paid the debt—shall he be brought a second time before the Judge as though he were still a debtor?

Christ has stood for him in his place and therefore he boldly asks, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Now, then, the Christian man takes up another position— he is adopted into the family of God—he has become God’s child. He is under the Law of God’s house. There is in every house an economy, a law by which the children and servants are ruled. If the child of God breaks the law of the house, the Father will visit his offense with fatherly stripes—a very different kind of visitation from that of a judge.

There are felons in prison today who, in a short time, will feel the lash on their bare backs—that is one thing—but yonder disobedient child is to receive a whipping from his father’s hand—that is quite another thing. Wide as the poles asunder are the anger of a judge and the anger of a father. The father loves the child while he is angry and is mainly angry for that very reason. If it were not his child he would probably take no notice of fault. But because it is his own boy who has spoken an untruth or committed an act of disobedience, he feels he must chastise him because he loves him. This needs no further explanation. There is a righteous anger in God’s heart towards guilty impenitent men. He feels none of that towards His people. He is their father and if they transgress, He will visit them with stripes—not as a legal punishment, since Christ has borne all that—but as a gentle paternal chastisement, that they may see their folly and repent of it—and awakened by His tender hand, they may turn unto their Father and amend their ways.

Now, child of God, if you are suffering today in any way whatever— whether from the ills of poverty or bodily sickness, or depression of spirits—remember there is not a drop of the judicial anger of God in it all. You are not being punished for your sins as a judge punishes a culprit— never believe such false doctrine! It is clean contrary to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. Gospel doctrine tells us that our sins were numbered on the Great Scapegoat’s head of old and carried away once and for all, never to be charged against us again. But we must use the eyes of our judgment in looking at our present affliction to see and confess how richly, as children, we deserve the rod.

Go back to the time since you were converted, dear Brother and Sister, and consider—do you wonder that God has chastened you? Speaking for myself, I wonder that I have ever escaped the rod at any time! If I had been compelled to say, “All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning,” I should not have marveled, for my shortcomings are many. How ungrateful have we been! How unloving and how unlovable! How false to our holiest vows! How unfaithful to our most sacred consecrations! Is there a single ordinance over which we have not sinned? Did we ever rise from our knees without having offended while at prayer? Did we ever get through a hymn without some wandering of mind or coldness of heart? Did we ever read a chapter which we might not have wept over because we did not receive the Truth in the love of it into our soul as we ought to have done? O, good Father, if we smart, richly do we deserve that we should yet smart again!

When you have confessed your sins, let me exhort you to use those same eyes zealously to search out the particular sin which has caused the present chastisement. “Oh,” says one, “I do not think I should ever find it out.” You might. Perhaps it lies at the very door. I do not wonder that some Christians suffer—I should wonder if they did not! I have seen them, for instance, neglect family prayer and other household duties and their sons have grown up to dishonor them. If they cry out, “What an affliction,” we would not like to say, “Ah, but you might have expected it. You were the cause of it”—but such a saying would be true. When children have left the parental roof and gone into sin, we have not been surprised when the father has been harsh, sour and crabbed in temper. We did not expect to gather figs from thorns, or grapes from thistles. We have seen men whose only thought was, “Get money, get money,” and yet they have professed to be Christians! Such persons have been fretful and unhappy, but we have not been astonished. Would you have the Lord deal liberally with such surly ill-tempered persons? No, if they walk stubbornly with Him, He will show Himself stubborn to them. Brother, the roots of your troubles may

run under your doorstep where your sin lies. Search and look!

But sometimes the cause of the chastisement lies further off. Every surgeon will tell you that there are diseases which become troublesome in the prime of life, or in old age, which may have been occasioned in youth by some wrong doing, or by accident—and the evil may have lain latent all those years. So may the sins of our youth bring upon us the sorrows of our riper years—faults and omissions of 20 years ago may scourge us today. I know it is so. If the fault may be of so great an age, it should lead us to more thorough search and more frequent prayer. Bunyan tells us that Christian met with Apollyon and had such a dark journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death because of slips he made when going down the hill into the Valley of Humiliation.

It may be so with us. Perhaps when you were young you were very untender towards persons of a sorrowful spirit. You are such yourself now— your harshness is visited upon you. It may be that when in better circumstances, you were known to look down upon the poor and despise the needy—your pride is chastened now. Many a minister has helped to injure another by believing a bad report against him and, by-and-by, he has, himself, been the victim of slander. “With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.” We have seen men who could ride the high horse among their fellow creatures and speak very loftily—and when they have been brought very, very low—we have understood the riddle. God will visit His children’s transgressions. He will frequently let common sinners go on throughout life unrebuked—but not so His children!

If you were going today and saw a number of boys throwing stones and breaking windows, you might not interfere with them. But if you saw your own lad among them, I will be bound you would fetch him out and make him repent of it. If God sees sinners going on in their evil ways, He may not punish them now—He will deal out justice to them in another state. But if it is one of His own elect, He will be sure to make him rue the day. Perhaps the reason of your trouble may not be a sin committed but a duty neglected. Search and look—and see where you have been guilty of omission. Is there a sacred ordinance which you have neglected, or a doctrine you have refused to believe? Perhaps the chastisement may be sent by reason of a sin as yet undeveloped—some latent proneness to evil. The grief may be meant to unearth the sin, that you may hunt it down.

Have you any idea of what a devil you are by nature? None of us know what we are capable of if left by Divine Grace. We think we have a sweet temper, an amiable disposition! We shall see!! We fall into provoking company and are so teased and insulted—and so cleverly touched in our raw places that we become mad with wrath—and our fine amiable temper vanishes in smoke, not without leaving blacks behind! Is it not a dreadful thing to be so stirred up? Yes it is, but if our hearts were pure, no sort of stirring would pollute them. Stir pure water as long as you like and no mud will rise. The evil is bad when seen, but it was quite as bad when not seen. It may be a great gain to a man to know what sin is in him, for then he will humble himself before his God and begin to combat his propensities. If he had never seen the filth he would never have swept the house! If he had never felt the pain the disease would have lurked within, but now that he feels the pain he will fly to the remedy. Sometimes, therefore, a trial may be sent that we may discern the sin which dwells in us and may seek its destruction.

What shall we do, this morning, if we are under the smiting of God’s hand, but humble ourselves before Him and go as guilty ones desiring to confess most thoroughly the particular sin which may have driven Him to chastise us, appealing to the precious blood of Jesus for pardon and to the Holy Spirit for power to overcome our sin? When you have so done let me give one word of caution before I leave this point. Do not let us expect, when we are in the trouble, to perceive any immediate benefit resulting from it. I have tried, myself, when under sharp pain to see whether I have grown a bit more resigned or more earnest in prayer, or more rapt in fellowship with God—and I confess I have never been able to see the slightest trace of improvement at such times—for pain distracts and scatters the thoughts. Remember that word, “Nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”

The gardener takes his knife and prunes the fruit trees to make them bring forth more fruit. His little child comes trudging at his heels and cries, “Father, I do not see that the fruit comes on the trees after you have cut them.” No, dear child, it is not likely you would, but come round in a few months when the season of fruit has come and then shall you see the golden apples which thank the knife. Graces which are meant to endure require time for their production and are not thrust forth and ripened in a night. Were they so soon ripe they might be as speedily rotten.

II. Now, as time is failing me, I will take up the second part of my discourse and handle it with great brevity. I want to give a very short EXPOSITION OF THE BENEFITS OF TROUBLE. This is a great subject. Many a volume has been written upon it and it might suffice to repeat the catalog of the benefits of trial, but I will not so detain you. Severe trouble in a true Believer has the effect of loosening the roots of his soul earthward and tightening the anchor-hold of his heart heavenward. How can he love the world which has become so dear to him? Why should he seek after grapes so bitter to his taste? Should he not, now, ask for the wings of a dove that he may fly away to his own dear country and be at rest forever?

Every mariner on the sea of life knows that when the soft zephyrs blow, men tempt the open sea with outspread sails. But when the black tempest comes howling from its den, they hurry with all speed to the haven. Afflictions clip our wings with regard to earthly things so that we may not fly away from our dear Master’s hands but sit there and sing to Him! But the same afflictions make our wings grow with regard to heavenly things—we are feathered like eagles, we catch the soaring spirit—a thorn is in our

nest and we spread our pinions towards the sun. Affliction frequently opens Truths of God to us and opens us to the Truth of God—I know not which of these two is the more difficult.

Experience unlocks Truths which otherwise were closed against us. Many passages of Scripture will never be made clear by the commentator—they must be expounded by experience. Many a text is written in a secret ink which must be held to the fire of adversity to make it visible. I have heard that you see stars in a well when none are visible above ground and I am sure you can discern many a starry Truth when you are down in the deeps of trouble which would not be visible to you elsewhere. Besides, I said it opened us to the Truth as well as the Truth to us. We are superficial in our beliefs—we are often drenched with Truth and yet it runs off us like water from a marble slab!

But affliction, as it were, plows us and sub-soils us and opens up our hearts so that into our innermost nature the truth penetrates and soaks like rain into plowed land. Blessed is that man who receives the Truth of God into his inmost self—he shall never lose it, but it shall be the life of his spirit. Affliction, when sanctified by the Holy Spirit, brings much glory to God out of Christians through their experience of the Lord’s faithfulness to them. I delight to hear an aged Christian giving his own personal testimony of the Lord’s goodness. Vividly upon my mind flashes an event of some 25 years ago. It is before me as if it had occurred yesterday, when I saw a venerable man of 80, gray and blind with age, and heard him in simple accents—simple as the language of a child—tell how the Lord had led him and had dealt well with him so that no good thing had failed of all that God had promised. He spoke as though he were a Prophet, his years lending force to his words. But suppose he had never known a trial? What testimony could he have borne? Had he been lapped in luxury and never endured suffering he might have stood there dumb and have been as useful as if he had never spoke. We must be tried or we cannot magnify the faithful God who will not leave His people!

Again, affliction gives us, through Grace, the inestimable privilege of conformity to the Lord Jesus. We pray to be like Christ, but how can we be if we are not men of sorrows and never become the acquaintance of grief? Like Christ and yet never traverse through the vale of tears? Like Christ and yet have all that heart could wish? Like Christ and never bear the contradiction of sinners against yourself? Like Christ and never say, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death”? O, Sir, you know not what you ask! Have you said, “Let me sit on Your right hand in Your kingdom?” It cannot be granted to you unless you will also drink of His cup and be baptized with His Baptism! A share of His sorrow must precede a share of His Glory. O, if we are ever to be like Christ, to dwell with Him eternally, we may be well content to pass through much tribulation in order to attain to it!

Once more, our sufferings are of great service to us when God blesses them, for they help us to be useful to others. It must be a terrible thing for a man never to have suffered physical pain. You say, “I should like to be the man”? Ah, unless you had extraordinary Grace, you would grow hard and cold—you would get to be a sort of cast-iron man—breaking other people with your touch. No, let my heart be tender, even be soft if it must be softened by pain, for I would rather know how to bind up my fellow’s wounds. Let my eyes have a tear ready for my brother’s sorrows even if in order to that I should have to shed 10,000 of my own. An escape from suffering would be an escape from the power to sympathize and that were to be deprecated beyond all things!

Luther was right when he said affliction was the best book in the minister’s library. How can the man of God sympathize with the afflicted ones if he knows nothing at all about their troubles? I remember a hard, miserly churl who said that the minister ought to be very poor so that he might have sympathy with the poor. I told him I thought he ought to have a turn at being very rich, too, so that he might have sympathy with the very rich! And I suggested to him that perhaps, upon the whole, it would be handiest to keep him somewhere in the middle that he might the more easily range over the experience of all classes. If the man of God who is to minister to others could be always robust, it were, perhaps, a loss. If he could be always sickly it might be equally so—but for the pastor to be able to range through all the places where the Lord suffers His sheep to go—is doubtless to the advantage of His flock.

And what it is to ministers, it will be to each one of you according to his calling, for the consolation of the people of God. Be thankful then, dear Brethren, be thankful for trouble! And above all be thankful because it will soon be over and we shall be in the land where these things will be spoken of with great joy. As soldiers show their scars and talk of battles when they come, at last, to spend their old age in the country home, so shall we in the dear land to which we are hastening, speak of the goodness and faithfulness of God which brought us through all the trials of the way! I would not like to stand in that white-robed host and hear it said, “These are they that come out of great tribulation, all except that one.” Would you like to be there to see yourself pointed at as the one saint who never knew a sorrow? O no, for you would be an alien in the midst of the sacred brotherhood! We will be content to share the battle, for we shall soon wear the crown and wave the palm.

I know that while I am preaching some of you have said, “Ah, these people of God have a hard time of it.” So have you. The ungodly do not escape from sorrow by their sin. I never heard of a man escaping from poverty through being a spendthrift. I never heard of a man who escaped from headache or heartache by drunkenness—or from bodily pain by licentiousness. I have heard the opposite! And if there are griefs to the holy there are others for you. Only mark this, ungodly ones, mark this—for you these things work no good! You pervert them to mischief—but for the

saints, they work eternal benefit! For you your sorrows are punishments. For you they are the first drops of the red hail that shall fall upon you forever. They are not so to the child of God. You are punished for your transgressions—he is not.

And let us tell you, too, that if this day you happen to be in peace, prosperity, plenty and happiness—yet there is not one child of God here, in the very deeps of trouble, that would change places with you under any consideration whatever! He would sooner be God’s dog and be kicked under the table, than be the devil’s darling and sit at meat with him. “Let God do as He pleases,” we say, “for while here we believe our worst state to be better than your best.” Do you think we love God for what we get out of Him and for nothing else? Is that your notion of a Christian’s love to God? We read in Jeremiah of certain ones who said they would not leave off worshipping the Queen of Heaven. “For when,” they said, “we worshipped the Queen of Heaven, we had bread in plenty, but now we starve.”

This is how the ungodly talk and that is what the devil thought was Job’s case. Said he—“Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has?” The devil does not understand real love and affection, but the child of God can tell the devil to his face that he loves God if He covers him with sores and sets him on the dunghill. And by God’s good help he means to cling to God through troubles ten-fold heavier than those he has had to bear, should they come upon him. Is He not a blessed God? Yes, let the beds of our sickness ring with it—He is a blessed God! In the night watches, when we are weary and our brain is hot and fevered, and our soul is distracted, we yet confess that He is a blessed God! Every ward of the hospital where Believers are found should echo with that note!

“A blessed God?” “Yes, that He is,” say the poor and needy here this morning and so say all God’s poor throughout all the land. “A blessed God?” “Yes,” say His dying people, “as He slays us we will bless His name. He loves us and we love Him and, though all His waves go over us and His wrath lies sorely upon us, we would not change with kings on their thrones if they are without the love of God.”

O, Sinner, if God smites a child of His so heavily, He will smite you one day! And if those He loves are made to smart, what will He do with those who rebel against Him and hate Him? “Praise the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” The Lord bless you and bring you into the bonds of His Covenant, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON-Psalm 88. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1565 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MASCHIL OF ETHAN, A MAJESTIC SONG  
NO. 1565

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens.” Psalm 89:1, 2.**

THIS Psalm is one of the very choicest songs in the night. Midst a stream of troubled thoughts there stands a fair island of rescue and redemption which supplies standing room for wonder and worship while the music of the words, like the murmuring of a river, sounds sweetly in our ears! Read the Psalm carefully and it will awaken your sympathy, for he who wrote it was bearing bitter reproach and was almost broken-hearted by the grievous calamities of his nation. Yet his faith was strong in the faithfulness of God and so he sang of the stability of the Divine Covenant when the outlook of circumstances was dark and cheerless. Nor did he ever sing more sweetly than he sang in that night of his sorrow. Greatly does it glorify God for us to sing His high praises in storms of adversity and on beds of affliction. It magnifies His mercy if we can bless and adore Him when He takes, as well as when He gives.

It is good that out of the very mouth of the burning furnace there should come a yet more burning note of grateful praise! I am told that there is a great deal of relief to sorrow in complaining—that the utterance of our murmurs may, sometimes, tend to relieve our pain or sorrow. I suppose it is so. Certainly it is a good thing to weep, for I have heard it from the mouth of many witnesses. Most of us have felt that there are griefs too deep for tears and that a flood of tears proves that the sorrow has begun to abate. But, I think, the best relief for sorrow is to sing—this man tried it, at any rate. When mercy seems to have departed, it is well to sing of departed mercy! When no present blessing appears, it is a present blessing to remember the blessing of the years gone by and to rehearse the praises of God for all His former mercies towards us. Two sorts of songs we ought to keep up even if the present appears to yield us no theme for sonnets—the song of the past for what God has done and the song of the future for the Grace we have not yet tasted—the Covenant blessings held in the pierced hand, safe and sure against the time to come!

Brothers and Sisters, I want you, at this time, to feel the spirit of gratitude within your hearts. Though your mind should be heavy, your countenance sad and your circumstances gloomy—still let the generous impulse kindle and glow. Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord! It does not seem to me to be much for us to sing God’s praises in fair weather. The shouts of, “Harvest home,” over the loaded wagons are proper, but they are only natural. Who would not sing, then? What bird in all the country is silent when the sun is rising and the dews of spring are sparkling? But the choicest choir charms the stars of night and no note is sweeter, even to the human ear, than that which comes from the bare bough amidst the abundant snows of dark winter!

O sons of sorrow, your hearts are tuned to notes which the joyful cannot reach! Yours is the full compass and swell. You are harps upon which the Chief Player on stringed instruments can display His matchless skill to a larger degree than upon the less afflicted. I pray He may do so now, by leading you to be first in the song. We must, all of us, follow, but some of us will not readily yield to be outstripped in this holy exercise. Like Elijah, we will try to run before the king’s chariot in this matter of praise! Accounting ourselves the greatest debtors of all to the Grace and mercy of God, we must and will sing loudest of the crowd and make even—

*“Heaven’s resounding arches ring  
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”*

I invite your attention to two things. First, we shall look at the work of the Eternal Builder—“Mercy shall be built up forever.” Then, secondly, we shall listen to the resolve of an everlasting singer—“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.” I take the second verse first—it is necessary for the handling of our subject. You know, in the book of Common Prayer, the rubric prescribes concerning a certain form of words that it is, “to be said or sung.” We will do both. The first part we will have is the verse which begins, “I have said.” And then the second part shall be the verse which begins, “I will sing.” It shall be said and sung, too! God grant we may say it in the depth of our heart and afterwards that our mouth may sing it and make it known unto all generations! May the Spirit of all Grace fill us with His own power!

I. First, then, let us contemplate THE ETERNAL BUILDER AND HIS WONDERFUL WORK. “I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens.” I can see a vast mass of ruins. Heaps upon heaps they lie around me. A stately edifice has tottered to the ground! Some terrible disaster has occurred. There it lies— cornice, pillar, pinnacle—everything of ornament and of utility broken, scattered, dislocated. The world is strewn with the debris. Journey where you will, the desolation is before your eyes. Who has done this? Who has cast down this temple? What hand has ruined this magnificent structure? Manhood! Manhood it is which has been destroyed and Sin was the agent that effected the Fall. It is man broken by his sin—iniquity has done it!

O you Devastator, what destructions have you worked in the earth! What desolation you have made unto the ends of the world! Everywhere is ruin! Everywhere is ruin! Futile attempts are made to rebuild this temple upon its own heap and the Babel towers arise out of the rubbish and abide, for a season, but they are soon broken down and the mountain of decay and corruption becomes even more hopeless of restoration! All that man has done with his greatest effort is but to make a huge display of his total failure to recover his position, to realize his pretentious plans, or to restore his own fleeting memories of better things. They may build and they may pile up stone upon stone and cement them together with untempered mortar, but their rude structure shall all crumble to the dust, again, for the first ruin will be perpetuated even to the last!

So must it be, for sin destroys all. I am vexed in my spirit and sorely troubled as I look at these ruins—fit habitations for owls and the dragon, the mole and the bat. Alas for manhood, that it should be thus fallen and destroyed! But what else do I see? I behold the great original Builder coming forth from the ivory palaces to undo this mischief. He comes not with implements of destruction, that He may cast down and destroy every vestige, but I see Him advancing with plummet and line, that He may raise, set up and establish, on the sure Foundation, a noble pile that shall not crumble with time, but endure throughout all ages!

He comes forth with mercy. So “I said” as I saw the vision,” Mercy shall be built up forever.” There was no material but mercy with which a temple could be constructed among men. What can meet the guilt of human crimes but mercy? What can redress the misery occasioned by wanton transgression but mercy? Mere kindness could not do it. Power alone—even Omnipotence—could not accomplish it. Wisdom could not even commence until Mercy stood at her right hand. But when I saw Mercy interpose, I understood the meaning. Something was to be done that would change the dreary picture that made my heart groan, for at the advent of Mercy the walls would soon rise until the roof ascended high and the palace received within its renovated glory the sublime Architect who built it!

I knew that now there would be songs instead of sighs since God had come and come in mercy! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, blessed was that day when Mercy, the Benjamin of God, His last-born attribute, appeared! Surely it was the son of our sorrow, but it was the son of His right hand. There had been no need of mercy if it had not been for our sin—thus from direst evil the Lord took occasion to display the greatest good! When Mercy came—God’s darling, for He says He delights in mercy—then was there hope that the ruins of the Fall would no longer be the perpetual misery of men! I said, “Mercy shall be built up.”

Now, if you closely scan the passage, you will clearly perceive that the Psalmist has the idea of God’s mercy being manifest in building because a great breach has to be repaired and the ruins of mankind are to be restored. As for building, it is a very substantial operation. A building is something which is palpable and tangible to our senses. We may have plans and schemes which are only visionary, but when it comes to building, as those know who have to build, there is something real being done, something more than surveying the ground and drawing the model. And oh, what real work God has done for men! What real work in the gift of His dear Son! The product of His infinite purpose now becomes evident. He is working out His great designs after the counsel of His own will!

What real work there is in the regeneration of His people! That is no fiction! Mercy is built and the blessings that you and I have received have not mocked us—they have not been the dream of fanatics nor the fancy of enthusiasts. God has done real work for you and for me, as we can bear testimony and as we do bear testimony at this hour. “For I have said, Mercy shall be built.” That is no sham, no dream! It is the act and deed of God! Mercy has been built. A thing that is built is a fixed thing. It exists— really exists and exists according to a substantial plan. It is presumed to be permanent. True, all earthly structures will mold and decay and man’s buildings will dissolve in the last great fire, but still, a building is more durable than a tent, or a temporary lodge in a garden of cucumbers and, “I have said, Mercy shall be built.”

It is not a movable berth, but a fixed habitation—I have found it so. And have not you? God’s mercy began with some of you—no, I must not talk about when it began—I mean you began to perceive it many years ago. Now, when these heads that are now bald or gray had bushy locks, black as a raven’s—when you were curly-headed boys and girls that clambered on your father’s knee—you remember, even then, the mercy of your God and it has continued with you! It is a fixed, substantial, real thing. Not the old house at home has been more fixed than the mercy of God! There has been a warm place for you by the fireside from your childhood until now and a mother’s love has not failed. The mercy of God to you has been more substantial than a house has ever been. You can endorse the declaration of David—“I have said, Mercy shall be built.”

A building is an orderly thing as well as a fixed thing. There is a scheme and design about it. Mercy shall be built. God has gone about blessing us with designs that only His own infinite perfections could have completed. We have not seen the design, yet, in the full proportion. We shall be lost in wonder, love and praise when we see it all carried out, but we already perceive some lines, some distinct traces of a grand design as we caught first one thought of God and then another, of His mercy toward us. Mercy shall be built. I see that it shall. This is no load of bricks. It is polished stones built one upon another! God’s Grace and goodness toward us have not come by chance, or as the blind distribution of a God who gave to all alike and for none with any special purpose.

No, but there has been as much a specialty of purpose to me as if I were the only one He loved, though, praised be His name, He has blessed and is blessing multitudes of others beside me! As I discovered that in all His dealings of mercy there was a plan, I said, “Mercy shall be built” and so it has been. Yes, more! If I had the time I would like to picture to you the digging out of that foundation of mercy in the olden times—the marking out of the lines of mercy in the predestinating purpose and the ancient Covenant of God. Then I would appeal to your experience and entreat you to observe how progressively, line upon line, the many promises have been verified to you up till now. With what transport you would say, “Yes, the figure may run, if it likes, on all fours! Yes, and may go on as many legs as a centipede and yet there shall be no spoiling of it, the metaphor is so good! Mercy has been in course of construction and is now being raised.”

So the song begins, “Mercy shall be built.” But now he says, “Mercy shall be built up.” Will you try to think, for a minute, upon these words—“built up”? It is not merely a long, low wall of mercy that is formed to make an enclosure or to define a boundary—it is a magnificent pile of mercy whose lofty heights shall draw admiring gazes that is being built up. God puts mercy on top of mercy and He gives us one favor that we may be ready to receive another! There are some Covenant blessings that you and I are not ready to receive yet. They would not be suitable to our present circumstances. “I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.” Weak eyes that are gradually recovering their use must not have too much light. A man half-starved must not be fed at once upon substantial meat—he must have the nutrient gently administered to him.

An excess of rain might inundate the land and wash up the plants, while gentle showers would refresh the thirsty soil and invigorate the herbs and the trees. Even so, mercy is bestowed upon us in measure. God does not give us every spiritual blessing at once. There are the blessings of our childhood in Grace which we, perhaps, shall not so much enjoy when we come to be strong men. But then the blessings of the strong man and of the father would crush the child and God abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence in the distribution of His gifts. And, as I thought of that, I said, “Yes, mercy shall be built up. There shall be one mercy on another.” Would that I had a vivid imagination and a tongue gifted with eloquence—then I would try to portray the 12 courses of the new Jerusalem and show how the stones of fair colors are set, one next to the other, so that the colors set each other off and blend into a wondrous harmony!

But I can clearly see that the mercy of the azure shall not come first. There shall be the mercy of the emerald to underlie it and there shall be an advance made in the preciousness of the stones with which God shall build us up and we cannot tell what the next is to be—certainly not what the next after that is to be, nor the next after that and the one to follow after that! But as I saw half-a-dozen of the courses of God’s mercy, I said, “His mercy shall be built up.” I can see it rising, tier on tier and course on course and it gathers wonders. The longer I gaze, the more I am lost in contemplation. Silent with astonishment, spell-bound with the fascinating vision, I think, I believe, I know that—“Mercy shall be built up.”

Moreover, my expectations are awakened. I am waiting eagerly for the next scene. The designs of mercy are not exhausted. The deeds of mercy are not all told. The display of mercy must reach higher than has ever yet dawned upon my imagination. Its foundations were laid low. In great mercy He gave me a broken heart. That was pure mercy, for God accepts broken hearts—they are very precious in His sight. But it was a higher mercy when He gave me a new heart which was bound up and united in His fear and filled with His joy! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us remember how He showed us the evil of sin and caused us to feel a sense of shame!

That was a choice mercy, but it was a clearer mercy when He gave us a sense of pardon. Oh, it was a blessed day when He gave us the little faith that tremblingly touched His garment’s hem! It was better when He gave us faith as small as a grain of mustard seed that grew. It has been better, still, when, by faith, we have been able to do many mighty works for Him. We do not know what we shall do when He gives us more faith! Far less can we imagine how our powers shall develop in Heaven, where faith will come to its full perfection! It will not die, as some idly pretend. There we shall implicitly believe in God. With the place of His Throne as the point of our survey, we shall see nothing but His sovereign will to shape events—so with joyful assurance of hope we shall look onward to the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ and the glory that is to follow. We shall sit in Heaven and sing that the Lord reigns! We shall gaze upon the earth and behold how it trembles at the coming of the King of kings! And with radiant faces we shall smile at Satan’s rage! We do not know what any one of our Graces may be built up into, but if you are conscious of any growth in any Grace, you have learned enough to appreciate the oracle that speaks in this wise—“I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever.”

Once again would I read this verse with very great emphasis and ask you to notice how it rebukes the proud and the haughty and how it encourages the meek and lowly in spirit. “I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever.” In the edification of the saints there is nothing but mercy! Some people seem to fancy that when we get to a certain point in Grace we do not need to plead for mercy. My dear Friends, if any of you get into that humor that you say, “I need not make any confession of sin. I need not ask pardon of sin,” you are trifling with the very Truths of God of which you think you are the most strong in! I do not care what doctrine it is that brings you there, you are in a dangerous state if you stop there. Get away from there quickly!

Your right position is at the Throne of Grace and the Throne of Grace is meant for people that need Grace and you need Grace now! Perhaps never more than now. Without new mercies every morning, as the manna that fed the Israelites of old, your days will be full of misery. Your Lord and Master taught you to say not only, “Our Father which are in Heaven,” and, “Your kingdom come,” but He bade you constantly to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.” “I have no trespasses,” one says. Brother, go home and look at your heart. I will have no argument with you. Take the bandage off your eyes. You are about as full of sin as an egg is full of meat. Among the rest of your many sins there is this rotten egg of an accursed pride as to your own state of heart! I said, no matter what you say, “Mercy shall be built up forever.”

I expect God to deal with me on the footing of mercy as long as I live. I do not expect that He shall build me up in any way but according to His Grace and pity and forgiving love. If there are any creatures in this world that can boast of having got beyond the need of asking for mercy, I have not learned their secret of self-deception! I know of some professors who climb so high up the ladder that they come down the other side. I fancy that is very much like the wonderful growing in perfection of which they boast about! It means full often going up so high that they are pure saints in their own esteem, but soon they have gone down so low that they are poor lost sheep in the estimation of the Churches of Christ! God grant you may not fall by any such process. “I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever.”

Brothers and Sisters, if you and I ever get to the gate of Heaven and stand upon the alabaster doorstep with our finger on the glittering latch— unless the Mercy of God carries us over the threshold we shall be dragged down to Hell even from the gates of Heaven! Mercy, mercy, mercy! His mercy endures forever because we always need it! As long as we are in this world we shall have to make our appeal to mercy and cry, “Father, I have sinned. Blot out my transgressions!” Well, that is, as I have said, what the text declares, “I have said, Mercy shall be built up,” nothing else but mercy. There will not come a point when the angelic masons shall stop and say, “Now then, the next course is to be merit. So far it has been mercy—but now the next course is to be perfection in the flesh—that course has no need of mercy.”

No, no! Mercy, mercy, mercy till the very top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of, “Grace, Grace unto it.” “Mercy shall be built up.” Yet glance your eyes onward. “I said, mercy shall be built up forever.” Forever? Well, I have been peering back into the past and I discover that nothing else but mercy can account for my being or my well-being. By the Grace of God I am what I am. The Psalm of my life, though filled with varied stanzas, has but one chorus—His mercy endures forever. Will you look back, Beloved, on all the building of your life and character? Any of it that has been real building—gold and silver and precious stones—has all been mercy and so the building will go on! The operation is proceeding slowly but surely. What? Though at this present hour you may be in grievous trouble, mercy is being built up for you.

“Oh, no,” you say, “I am tottering and my days are declining and I feel I shall be utterly cast down.” Yes, you may be very conscious of your weakness and infirmity, but the mercy of the Lord is steadfast—its foundation abides firm—not a single stone can be moved from its setting! The work is going on, storm or tempest notwithstanding. There is nothing precarious about the fact that mercy shall be built up forever. Let not the murky atmosphere that surrounds you blind your eyes—the eyes of your understanding—to this glorious word, “forever.” Rather say, “If I am well set in this fabric of Mercy, my castings down are often the way in which God builds up His mercy. I shall be built up forever! And oh, if it goes on being built up forever—I am ravished with the thought, though I cannot give expression to it—what will it grow to? What will it grow to?”

If it is going to be built up in the case of any one of you, say 70 years, oh it will be a grand pinnacle, an everlasting monument to the Eternal Builder’s praise! But you see it will go on—it will be built up forever. What? Never cease? No, never! But shall it never come to a pause? No, mercy shall be built up forever—it shall go on towering upward. Do you imagine that it will go at a slower rate, by-and-by? That is not likely. It is not God’s way. He generally quickens His speed as He ripens His purposes! So I suspect that He will go on building up His mercy, tier on tier, height on height, forever! Says one, “Will its colossal altitude pierce the clouds and rise above the clear azure of the sky?” It will. Read the text—“Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens”—not in the heavens, only, but in the, “very heavens”—the heaven of heavens! He will build up to that height!

He will go on building you up, dear Brother, dear Sister, till He gets you to Heaven. He will build you up till He makes a heavenly man or woman of you, till where Christ is, you shall be—and what Christ is, as far as He is Man—you shall be! And with God, Himself, you shall be allied—a child of God, an heir of Heaven, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. I wish I had an imagination, I say again, bold and clear, uncramped by all ideas of the masonry of men, free to expand and still to cry, “Excelsior.” Palaces, I think, are paltry, and castles and cathedrals are only grand in comparison with the little cots that nestle on the plain. Even mountains, high as the Himalayan range or broad as the Andes, though their peaks are so lofty to our reckoning, are mere specks on the surface of the great globe, itself, and our earth is small among the celestial orbs, a little sister of the larger planets.

Figures quite fail me—my description must take another turn. I try and try again to realize the gradual rising of this temple of Mercy which shall be built up forever. Within the bounds of my feeble vision, I can discern that it has risen above death, above sin, above fear, above all danger! It has risen above the terrors of the Judgment Day! It has outsoared the “wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.” It towers above all our thoughts. Our bliss ascends above an angel’s enjoyments and he has pleasures that were never checked by a pang but he does not know the ineffable delight of free Grace and dying love! It has ascended above all that I dare to speak of, for even the little I know has about it something that it were not lawful for a man to utter! It is built up into the very arms of Christ where His saints shall lie imparadised forever, equal with Himself upon His throne!

“I said, Mercy shall be built up forever.” The building-up will go on throughout eternity. Yes, and what is once built up will never fall down, neither in whole nor in part. There is the mercy of it! God is such a Builder that He finishes what He begins and what He accomplishes is forever. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” He does not do and undo, or build for His people after a Covenant fashion and then cast down, again, because the counsel of His heart has changed. So let us sing and praise and bless the name of the Lord! I do hope that, from what little our experience has taught us already, we are prepared to cry, like the Psalmist, “I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens.”

II. Well, now, we come back to the first verse. There are first that shall be last and last that shall be first, so is it with our text. We have looked at the Eternal Builder, let us now listen to AN EVERLASTING SINGER. “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.” Here is a good and godly resolution—“I will sing.” The singing of the heart is intended and the singing of the voice is expressed, for he mentions his mouth. And equally true is it that the singing of his pen is implied, since the Psalms that he wrote were for others to sing in generations that should follow.

He says, “I will sing.” I do not know what else he could do. There is God building in mercy. We cannot assist Him in that! We have no mercy to contribute and what is built is to be all of mercy. We cannot impart anything to the great temple which He is building. But we can sit down and sing. It seems delightful that there should be no sound of hammer or noise of axe— that there should be no other sound than the voice of song as when they fabled of the ancient player upon the instruments that he built temples by the force of song! So shall God build up His Church and so shall He build us as living stones into the sacred structure and so shall we sit and muse on His mercy till the music breaks from our tongue and we rise to our feet and stand and sing about it! I will sing of the mercy while the mercy is being built up. “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.”

But will he not soon sink these sweet notes and relapse into silence? No. He says, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.” Will he not grow weary and wish for some other occupation? No, for true praise is a thirsty thing and when it drinks from a golden chalice it soon empties it and yearns for deeper draughts with strong desire. It could drink up Jordan at a draught! This singing praise to God is a spiritual passion. The saved soul delights itself in the Lord and sings on and on and on unwearily. “I will sing forever,” he says. Not, “I will get others to perform and then I will retire from the service,” but rather, “I will, myself, sing. My own tongue shall take the solo, whoever may refuse to join in the chorus. I will sing and with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness.” Oh, that is blessed—that singing personally and individually!

It is a blessed thing to be one of a choir in the praise of God and we like to have others with us in this happy employment. Still, for all that, the 103rd Psalm is a most beautiful solo. It begins, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and it finishes up with, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” There must be personal, singular praise, for we have received personal and singular mercies! I will sing, I will sing, I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever! Now note his subject. “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.” What, not of anything else? Are the mercies of the Lord his exclusive theme? “Arma virumque cano”— “Arms and the man, I sing,” says the Latin poet. “Mercies and my God, I sing,” says the Hebrew Seer. “I will sing of mercies,” says the devout Christian. This is the fountain of mercy where, if a man drinks, he will sing far better than he that drinks of the Castalian fountain and on Parnassus begins to tune His harp—

*“Praise the mount, oh, fix me on it,  
Mount of God’s unchanging love.”*

Here we are taught a melodious sonnet, “sung by flaming tongues above.” “I will sing of mercies, I will sing of mercies forever,” he says and, I suppose, the reason is because God’s mercies would be built up forever. The morning stars sang together when God’s work of Creation was completed. Suppose God created a world every day? Surely the morning stars would sing every day. Ah, but God gives us a world of mercies every day and, therefore, let us sing of His mercies forever! Any one day that you live, my Brothers and Sisters, there is enough mercy packed away into it to make you sing not only through that day but through the rest of your life! I have thought, sometimes, when I have received great mercies of God, that I almost wanted to pull up and to “rest and be thankful” and say to Him, “My blessed Lord, do not send me any more for a little while. I really must take stock of these. Come, my good secretaries, take down notes and keep a register of all His mercies.” Let us gratefully respond for the manifold gifts we have received and send back our heartiest praise to God who is the Giver of every good thing.

But, dear me! Before I could put the basketfuls away on the shelf, there came wagons loaded with more mercy! What was one to do, then, but to sit on the top of the pile and sing for joy of heart? Then let us lift each parcel and look at each label and lay them up in the house and say, “Is it not full of mercy? As for me, I will go and sit, like David, before the Lord and say, ‘Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me up to now? And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?’” I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever because I shall never have finished with them! It is true, as Addison puts it*—*

*“Eternity is too short*

*To utter all Your praise.”*  
You will never accomplish the simple task of acknowledgments because there will be constantly more mercies coming! You will always be in arrears! In Heaven itself you will never have praised God sufficiently. You will need to begin Heaven over, again, and have another eternity, if such a thing could be, to praise Him for the fresh benefits that He bestows. “For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: therefore will I sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.”

What a spectacle it will be as you sit in Heaven and watch God building up His mercies forever, or, if it may be, to wander over all the worlds that God has made, for I suppose we may do that and yet still have Heaven for our home. Heaven is everywhere to the heart that lives in God. What a wonderful sight it will be to see God going on building up His mercy. Ah, we have not acquired an idea of the grandeur of the plan of mercy. No thought can conceive, no words can paint the grandeur of His Justice. Ah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, although there have been expressions and metaphors used about the wrath to come which cannot be found in Scripture and are not to be justified, yet I am persuaded that there is no exaggeration possible of the inviolability of God’s Law, of the truthfulness of His threats, of the terror of His indignation, or of the holiness of Jehovah—a holiness that shall constrain universal homage but you must always take care that you balance all your thoughts.

In the retributions of His wrath, there shall be a revelation of His righteousness, for no sentence of His majesty will ever cast a shadow over His mercy and every enemy will be speechless before the equity of His award! They that hate Him shall hide their faces from Him—in burning shame they shall depart to perpetual banishment from His Presence. Their condemnation will not dim the purity of His attributes. The glory of the redeemed will also reveal the righteousness of Jehovah and His saints will be perfectly satisfied when they are conformed to His likeness. On the summit of the eternal hill you shall sit down and survey that Mercy City, now in course of construction, built up! It lies four square. Its height is the same as its breadth, ever towering, ever widening, ever coming to that Divine completion which, nevertheless, it has, in another sense, already attained.

We know that God in His mercy shall be All in All. “I will sing of the mercy of the Lord forever,” for I shall see His mercy built up forever. This singing of Ethan was intended to be instructive. How large a class did he want to teach? He intended to make known God’s mercy to all generations. Dear, dear—if a man teaches one generation, is not that enough? Modern thought does not adventure beyond the tithe of a century and it gets tame and tasteless before half that tiny span of sensationalism has given it time to evaporate. But the echoes of the Truths of God are not so transient—they endure and, by means of the printing press, we can teach generation after generation, leaving books behind us as this good man has bequeathed this Psalm—which is teaching us, tonight, perhaps, more largely than it taught any generation nearer to him.

Will you transmit blessed testimonies to your children’s children? It should be your desire to do something in the present life that will live after you are gone. It is one proof to us of our immortality that we instinctively long for a sort of immortality here. Let us strive to get it, not by carving our names on some stone, or writing our epitaphs upon a pillar as Absalom did when he had nothing else by which to commemorate himself, but get to work to do something which shall be a testimony to the mercy of God that others shall see when we are gone.

Ethan said, “God’s mercy shall be built up forever,” and he is teaching us still that blessed fact. Suppose you cannot write and your influence is very narrow, yet you shall go on singing of God’s praise forever and you shall go on teaching generations yet to come. You Sunday school teachers, you shall be Sunday school teachers forever. “Oh,” you say, “no, I cannot expect that.” Well, but you shall. You know it will always be Sunday when you get to Heaven. There will never be any other day, there—one everlasting Sabbath—and through you and by you shall be made known to angels and principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God!

I teach some of you now and I often think you could better teach me, some of you old experienced saints. You will teach me, by-and-by. When we are in Glory we shall, all of us, be able to tell one another something of God’s mercy. Your view of it, you know, differs from mine and mine from my Brother’s. You, my dear Friend, see mercy from one point and your wife, even though she is one with you, sees it from another point and detects another sparkle of it which your eyes have never caught. So shall we barter and exchange our knowledge in Heaven and trade together and grow richer in our knowledge of God! “I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens.” Then I said, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.”

We will go on exulting in God’s mercy as long as we have any being and that shall be forever and ever! When we have been in Heaven millions of years, we shall not need any other subject to speak of but the mercy of our blessed God and we shall find auditors with charmed ears to sit and listen to the matchless tale and some that will ask us to tell it yet again! They will come to Heaven, you know, as long as the world lasts, some out of every generation. We shall see them streaming in at the gates more numerously, I hope, as the years roll by, till the Lord comes. And we will continue to tell to fresh corners what the Lord has done for us.

We can never stop! We can never cease! But as the heavens are telling the Glory of God and every star declares in wondrous diversity His praise, so where the stars differ from one another in the Glory of God above, the saints shall be forever telling the story which shall remain untold—the love we knew, but which surpassed our knowledge—the Grace of which we drank, but yet was deeper than our draughts! We will be telling of the bounty in which we swam until we seemed to lose ourselves in love—the favor which was still greater than our utmost conceptions and rose above our most eager desires. God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, and send you away singing*—*

*“All that remains for me  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come, To bear me to my King!”*

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THE MIGHTY ARM  
NO. 1314

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You have a mighty arm: strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.” Psalm 89:13.**

WHEN the soul is perfectly reconciled to God and comes to delight in Him, it rejoices in all His attributes. At the first, perhaps, it dwells almost exclusively upon His love and His mercy, but it afterwards proceeds to find joy in the sterner attributes and especially delights itself in His holiness and in His power. It is a mark of the growth of Christian knowledge when we begin to distinguish the attributes and to rejoice in God in each one of them. It betokens meditation and thought when we are able to discern the things of God and to give to the Lord a Psalm of praise for each one of His glories. And it also indicates a growingly intimate communion with the great Father when we begin to perceive His adorable Character and to rejoice so much in all that He is, that we can take the attributes in detail and bless, praise and magnify Him on account of each one of them.

Under the Jewish Law there were forms of the sacrifices which were of the simplest kind, such as the offering of turtle doves or young pigeons, which were simply torn asunder and burned upon the altar. But there were other and more elaborate rules for the sacrifices which were taken from the flock and the herd. These were rightly divided and the parts laid in their places—the head, the fat, the inwards, the legs and so on—as if to show that although some Believers only know the atoning sacrifice as a whole and after a superficial manner, there are others still further instructed who look deeper into Divine mystery and see the various forms which the great Truths of God assume.

It is a saving thing to know the Lord God with all your heart, but I would, Beloved, that you knew all the varied rays of His pure light. That you beheld the many glories of His crown and could rejoice in each distinct excellence of His infinite perfection. The subject of this morning is the power of God as the subject of adoration. Here, dear Brothers and Sisters, we have large scope for thought, for the power of God is manifested in connection with all His other attributes. It is the cause of all His works and the basis and working force by which His kingdom is maintained and Himself revealed.

How clearly is His power beheld in creation. There, indeed, O Lord, “You have a mighty arm.” We injure ourselves and dishonor our Creator when we pass over His works as if they were beneath the notice of spiritual minds. It is perverse on our part to forget the exhortation, “What God has created, call not you common.” The Psalmist sang concerning the creating might of God in verses 11 and 12 of the Psalm before us—“The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours: as for the world and the fullness thereof, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name.”

David did not divide between Revelation and Nature. He loved the Word of God and meditated therein day and night, but at the same time he triumphed in the works of God’s hands. In the 104th Psalm he found music in rocks and rills, in fowls and fir trees, and rejoiced that the Glory of the Lord shall endure forever, the Lord shall rejoice in His works. In the 8th Psalm he considered the heavens and burst forth with the exclamation, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! “With the same feeling I led you to sing this morning that child’s hymn in which the power of God is reverenced—

*“I sing the almighty power of God,  
Which made the mountains rise,  
Which spreads the flowing seas abroad,  
And built the lofty skies.”*

The Lord made Job and his friends remember his power as seen in creation. Indeed, it was by revealing that one attribute that Job’s friends were silenced and the Patriarch, himself, was led to cry, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You?” We ought not to overlook that which had so salutary an influence upon others. It is a pity when people become so spiritual that they have no eyes whatever for the Lord’s power in rivers and mountains, in seas and storms—for God has made them all and as in a glass He is darkly to be seen in them. “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”

I can understand the feeling of some who say, “I prefer spiritual preaching and I delight most to read the spiritual parts of the Word of God rather than the historical records, and to think of His Grace rather than of His wisdom in Nature.” But there is a fault about such a preference, excellent as it is in one way. It is as though you had a friend who was a great artist, and a master in statuary, able to make the marble almost live and speak with his magic chisel. You are accustomed to call upon this eminent sculptor and it gives you great pleasure to talk with him and to associate with his children. But you have never gone into his studio, for his masterpieces do not interest you.

Now, this is poor fellowship. If ever you get to be in perfect sympathy with your friend, you will be interested in that which interests him, and charmed with the various proofs of your friend’s powers in design and execution. You will study his works for his sake and love him all the more because of those wonders of beauty and joy which his hands produce. If the Lord thinks fit to display the hand of His power in the visible universe, it would ill become any of His children to close his eyes to it. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” “All the works praise You, O God; but Your saints shall bless You.”

So, too, the power of God is to be seen in Providence—in the overruling hand which controls common events. Our sweet singer writes in verse 9, “You rule the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise You still them.” God’s power is seen in the great phenomena of Nature and even in the lesser matters of everyday life. His hand guides the fall of every sere leaf and adorns each blade of grass with its own drop of dew! But chiefly His way is in the whirlwind and the clouds are the dust of His feet. The mighty hand of the Lord is to be seen in the events of human history. His power is manifest in courts and armies, in the rise and fall of empires, in the growth of nations, or in their overthrow. Behold how He broke Egypt in pieces as one that was slain and scattered His enemies with His strong arm.

His people did not refuse to sing of His great power when He smote great kings and slew famous kings because His mercy to His people endures forever. It ought to be a subject of great joy to all righteous souls that the world is not left to itself, or to tyrants. The might is with the right, after all, for power belongs unto God. There is a Governor and Ruler who is Lord of all and all power is in His hands. Have you not often wished more power to the arm of the man who attacks insolence and cruelty? Be glad, then, that all power is in the hand of the Judge of all the earth, who must and will do right.

He will not leave bloodshed unavenged, nor suffer wanton cruelty and horrible brutality to go unpunished. And if the great ones of the earth pass by with indifference, or wink their eye at wicked policy, there is an eye that sees and a hand that will mete out stern and sure vengeance! In patience possess your souls, O you people of God, for, “God reigns over the heathen, He sits upon the Throne of His holiness.” The needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the oppressed forever trodden down, for verily the Lord reigns and His power shall defend the cause of right. It is another subject for which we have reason, also, to adore God, that His power is seen in the ultimate judgement of the wicked—a terrible subject upon which I will not enlarge—but one which should prostrate us in the dust before His awful majesty.

There are two flaming jewels of Jehovah’s crown which will be terribly seen in Hell—His wrath and His power. “What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?” Righteous indignation and Omnipotence will be glorified together in that last tremendous act of judgment in which He will separate the righteous from the wicked and apportion to the unbelievers their due. “Who knows the power of Your anger?” What must be the strength of an angry God! Who shall stand against Him when once He stirs up His indignation, when He shall break the nations with a rod of iron, and shiver them like potters’ vessels?

“Beware,” He said, “you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” Who shall stand against this great and terrible

God in the day of His wrath? Who shall endure in that day when Mercy’s day is over and Justice, alone, sits on her burning throne? Neither of these, however, is the subject of this morning, though we should not have completed the topic without alluding to them. The subject is the power displayed in connection with the mercy of God, for so Ethan begins this noble Covenant Psalm: “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.”

Power in alliance with Grace is our one theme. First, we shall consider the mighty power of God in His Grace, as revealed in our experience. Secondly, Divine power, as displayed in Christ Jesus. And, thirdly, we shall endeavor to reflect upon the same power and consider how it should be practically recognized. We must be brief on each point, for our time is short.

I. First, the mighty arm of God displayed in the way of Grace, as MANIFESTED IN OUR EXPERIENCE. And, Beloved, remember the Divine longsuffering. What a mighty arm of Grace it must have been which held back the anger of God while we were in a state of rebellion and impenitence! For God to rule the angry sea seems nothing, to me, compared with the power which He exercises upon Himself when He endures the provocations of ungodly men, the hardness of their hearts, their rejection of Christ and, oftentimes, their blasphemous speeches and their unclean deeds. O Sinner, when you are sinning with a high hand and with an outstretched arm, is it not a wonder of wonders that God does not cut you down and end your insolence?

He said, “Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries.” Is it not a marvel that He has not eased Himself of you and taken you away with a stroke? You know how it is with some men—a word and a blow—but it has not been so with God. There have been many words of love and many deeds of kindness. He has waited long and is waiting now, stretching out His hands all day to a disobedient and gainsaying people. What power is this which restrains its own power, the power of God over His own Omnipotence, so that He does not let His anger flame forth at once and devour the ungodly, nor suffer the sword of execution to smite down the rebel in the midst of his provocations? Glory be unto Your loving kindness and Your longsuffering, O God, for in them we see Your mighty self-restraining power!

But, next, we saw the power of God so as to recognize it when the Lord subdued us by His mighty Grace. What Omnipotence is displayed in the conquest of every rebellious sinner! By nature the sinner stands out very stoutly against God and will not obey His voice. Often he is bulwarked round with prejudices and you and I, who seek to convert him, are quite unable to reach him. Prejudice is an earthwork into which you may fire with the heaviest cannon, but without use, for the balls are buried in the earth and no result follows. When men will not see, no light can help them, for they willfully close their eyes. When they will not hear, the charms of the Gospel are useless, for they have resolutely closed their ears.

It is a wonder of wonders, when, at last, God conquers prejudice and the man finds himself where he would have sworn he never would be— melted down and penitent at Jesus’ feet! If a Prophet had told him it would ever be so, he would have said, “You are mad! This cannot be! I abhor the very name of it.” You have a mighty arm, O God, when prejudiced Saul of Tarsus falls down at Your feet and rises to become your Apostle! Men are surrounded often with a granite wall of obstinacy—they will not yield to the power of Divine Love. Preach as you may, they are not to be moved, but remain like an impregnable fortress, frowning from its own inaccessible rock, defying all assaults.

You can find no way to get at them. You would be willing, almost, to die, if you could capture their hearts for Christ, but they are neither to be taken by threats nor by wooing. They are like leviathan whose scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. “Can you fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears?” They appear to have no joints to their harness through which the arrow of conviction may penetrate. But You have a mighty arm, O God, and Your enemies are made to feel Your arrows! Those who were exceedingly stout against You have, nevertheless, come crouching at Your feet and have become Your servants! Glory be to God, the northern iron and the steel become wax at His bidding!

We have seen some, also, who have been rooted in their habits of sin, altogether severed from their old sins. Wonder of wonders, the Ethiopian has changed his skin and the leopard has lost his spots, for he who was accustomed to do evil has learned to do well! Behold a miracle of mighty Grace! The sinner has grown old in sin—like an old oak he has become rooted to the earth by a thousand roots. To transplant him seemed impossible—it were far easier to cut him down. Yet the giant hand of Grace has taken hold of that ancient tree and shaken it to and fro by conviction of sin and, at last, it has, by conversion, been drawn from its place right up by the roots, so that the place which once knew it knew it no more! The rock and soil in which it had been imbedded for, perhaps, half a century, were made to give way before the upheaving, uprooting force and the man, divided from his former life, has been a proof of what the Lord can do!

The Lord knows how to cleave the mountain and divide the sea and, therefore, He can separate men from their darling lusts and teach them to cut off right arms and pluck out right eyes rather than perish in sin. Truly, Lord, You have a mighty arm! Satan teaches men to defend themselves against Grace by bulwarks of pride. They say, “Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice?” They lift up their horn on high and speak with a stiff neck! They are self-righteous. They are sure that they have done no ill—the Gospel is powerless upon them because they are so lofty in their looks and insolent in their thoughts. But You have a mighty arm, O Lord!

You lay proud sinners very low. You make them hungry and thirsty and then they cry unto You in their trouble.

You have a mighty arm among the proud and You bring down their heart with labor! They fall down and there is none to help. “He has put down the mighty from their seats.” Nebuchadnezzar, from saying, “Behold this great Babylon that I have built,” learned to confess that those who walk in pride, the Lord is able to abase. Equally mighty is the Lord to overcome despair, for this is another one of the fortresses in which sinners entrench themselves against Divine Grace. “There is no hope,” they say, “therefore we will give up ourselves to our iniquities.” And it is almost idle to attempt to convert those who are willfully despairing. They resent the consolations of the Bible and reject the promises of God.

And yet the Lord can break the bars of iron and cut the gates of brass in pieces! He can bring up the captives from the dungeons of despair and set them on a rock! He can put a new song into their mouths and make them praise His name forevermore. From the iron cage, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, can set the captives free! All glory be unto His name! When God resolves to save the sinner, He will have His will without violating the will of man! In a sweet, soft, gentle manner, in which the power lies in the gentleness and the force lies in the tenderness, the Lord can conquer the most obstinate! He makes the lion to lie down with the lamb, so that a little child shall lead it. Thus the power of God is seen in the conquest of sinners.

That power is equally seen in their transformation, for is it not a marvel that God should be able to make old and corrupt rebels into new creatures in Christ Jesus? Every conversion is a display of Omnipotence. To create the world was but half a wonder compared with the creation of a right spirit, for there was nothing to hinder when God spoke and the world began. But when God speaks to ungodly men there is a resisting force which impedes the work and even defies the great Worker. There is a darkness and a death. There is a force of evil and an inability towards good which must be overcome, yet the Lord makes all things new, and causes the new creation to arise in the hearts of His people! Verily He has a mighty arm! Glory be to the Lord who only does great wonders with a high hand and an outstretched arm!

Conversion is also called a resurrection. It will be a great feat of power when dead carcasses shall live at the sound of the last trumpet, but it is an equal wonder when the dry bones of dead sinners come to life—when those who were scattered at the grave’s mouth, the hopeless, graceless, Christless—are, nevertheless, made to live at the sound of God’s Word by the power of His Spirit. Oh, you that have been new created and quickened into newness of life, adore His power today! Who but a God could have made you what you are? Consider what you were and reflect upon the glorious position to which the Lord has brought you by the blood of the Cross!

Think what rebels you were and how set on mischief your nature was—and now, subdued by Sovereign Grace, your spirit longs for His embrace—you follow after holiness and seek to have it perfected in the fear of God. What a revolution is this! What a turning of things upside down! To turn the wilderness into springs of water and the desert into a flowing stream is nothing compared with turning the dead, cold, dry heart of man into a mighty wellspring of love springing up unto eternal life! Glory be to Your power, oh You infinitely mighty Jehovah, You have a mighty arm!

That same power is seen, dear Friends, in the various deliverances which the Lord gives to His people at the outset, when their enemies come against them so fiercely. Behold, my Brothers and Sisters, how strong was the hand of God which delivered us from the bondage of our first doubts and fears when conscience accused and the Law condemned! When we thought ourselves only waiting for the death guarantee and the execution. Behold the Lord has routed our despair, He has set us free from fear and brought us into the liberty with which Christ makes men free! We were slaves to sin, too, and oh how sin marshaled all its armies against us at the first, hoping it might cut off our earliest hopes.

But mighty was that Christ of God who put all our sins to the rout and drowned them in the Red Sea of His blood! “There broke He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” Then Satan came forth with the most horrible temptations and roared upon us like a lion, for he will not willingly lose his subjects. He sought to cast about us all his nets, that he might hold us captive and prevent our flying to the Divine refuge. But, behold, the prey has been taken from the mighty and the lawful captive has been delivered! And we are, this day, rescued from the power of sin and Satan. Even the Law, itself, has no power over us to condemn us, for Christ has satisfied it and we are free.

Mighty is Your arm, O God! Your own right hand and Your holy arm have gotten You the victory! And since then, Beloved, in the continual upholding of the saints, in their final perseverance which is guaranteed, how much of the power of God is seen! You have passed through many troubles, some of you, troubles most heavy and sore, but they have not prevailed against you nor overthrown you. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord deliverers him out of them all.” Fierce were the foes that gathered against us, many a time, and had not the Lord been on our side they had swallowed us up! But You, O Lord, have a mighty arm, and in Your name have we found a refuge.

They compassed us about like bees, yes, they compassed us about, but in the name of the Lord have we destroyed them. Out of what sins and temptations have we come forth victorious! With some of you, your path has been through the wilderness and through one continuous scene of warfare. Snares and traps have been thickly strewn all along your path— trials and discouragements have fallen like a storm of hail perpetually beating—and yet you are not overthrown! He keeps the feet of His saints.

The life of any Christian is a world of wonders, but in some Believers their experience consists of a series of great miracles. “O my Soul, you have trodden down strength.” How has our soul escaped as a bird from the fowler’s snare! The mighty adversaries have been overcome by Him who is mightier than all!

The Divine strength has been manifested in our weakness. My Brothers and Sisters, is it not a wonder that being such a poor worm as you are, yet you have never been crushed? Is it not a marvel that though your faith has been as a bruised reed it has not been broken—and though your piety has been like smoking flax it has never been quenched? Kept alive with death so near, preserved when enemies have been so fierce, will you not say, indeed, “You have a mighty arm, strong is Your right hand”? Brethren, the end comes, but it will all be right at last, for unless the Lord shall come, we have yet to meet the last grim adversary, but we are not afraid! Our Brethren who have gone before us have set us an example of how to die triumphantly!

How gloriously have they triumphed in their last hours! We have stood by their side, seen the brightness of their eyes when all around was death, and heard their exulting songs when all that looked upon them wept at the thought of their departure. Their cheek blanched? Far from it! They have been as jubilant in their dying hour as the warrior when he divides the spoil. As the bride rejoices on her wedding day, they have looked forward to the coming of their great Lord and to their being blessed forever in His embrace! We have been ready to cry out with them, “O death, where is your sting! O grave, where is your victory! “Truly, Lord, when Your poor, weak, suffering people die triumphantly, we see that You have a mighty arm!

When flesh and heart are failing, when friends cannot help, when every earthly comfort vanishes—for the heart to still rejoice and triumph—this is to see the arm of the Lord made bare and this causes us to bless and magnify His holy name! I would to God that I had more ability to set forth this majestic subject, but I have done my best. I ask your meditations in the quiet of this afternoon to assist me, that you may really adore and bless the power which is so conspicuous in every vessel of mercy, so revealed in yourself if you are, indeed, a child of God! O Holy Spirit, make known to us who believe, the exceeding greatness of Your mighty power!

II. Secondly, let us behold the mighty arm of God as specially DISPLAYED IN THE PERSON OF CHRST JESUS. And here will you kindly follow me in the Psalm, itself? There you will see that the power of God displayed in Jesus Christ, in the choice of Him and the exaltation of Him, to be a Prince and a Savior. See verse 19—“I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” Christ is the Incarnation of the power of Divine Grace. In Him dwells the power of God to save the sons of men and yet in what weakness it dwelt! He was a man despised and rejected, lowly and meek, poor and without worldly honor. His was the weakness of shame and suffering, poverty and dishonor.

But the power of God was upon Him and is upon Him now. It is a grand thing to know that God, by the weakness of man, taking it into connection with His own Nature, has routed sin, Satan, death and Hell! The battle in the wilderness was between Satan and a Man, tempted as we are, but oh, how gloriously that matchless Man overthrew the tempter and prevailed! The agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was that of a Man—it was a Man, though God, who sweat great drops of blood and uttered strong cries and tears, and won the victory by which evil is dethroned—and He that met the powers of evil on the Cross and stood alone and trod the wine-press till there remained not an uncrushed cluster, was a Man. It is by His power, even the power of the Man of Nazareth, that all the powers of evil have been forever blasted and withered so that, though they rebel, it is but a struggling gasp for life.

As surely as God sits on His Throne, the foot of the Seed of the woman shall be upon the serpent’s head, to crush it forever. Mighty as were the hosts of evil, God has exalted One chosen out of the people and laid help upon Him, that He may eternally vanquish all the hosts of darkness. Strong is Your right hand, O Savior, for by weakness and suffering and death You have overthrown all Your people’s foes! His power was seen, next, in our Lord’s anointing. “I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him.” You know how in His preaching there went out of His mouth a sharp two-edged sword with which He smote sin because the Spirit of God was upon Him. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit bore witness in the entire body of Christ, making all His servants speak with tongues of fire the Word of the Gospel.

The Spirit of God is still with Christ on earth in His Church, so that, feeble though the speech of His ministers may be, a secret power attends it, irresistibly subduing the forces of evil. Rejoice this day, Beloved, for the anointing still rests in the Church of God and the anointed Redeemer must be victorious in every place. Thanks be unto God which causes His Word to triumph in every place by the power of the eternal Spirit! We ought, therefore, to adore Jesus Christ as having the power of God, because the Holly Spirit is always with Him and with His Word and He is, therefore, mighty to save!

We must equally magnify the power of God because of the continuance of the empire of Christ in the world. As said the Psalmist—“with whom My hand shall be established, My arm, also, shall strengthen Him. The enemy shall not exact upon Him; nor the son of wickedness afflict Him and I will beat down His foes before His face and plague them that hate Him.” These 1,800 years every effort has been put forth to root up the Church of Christ. The devil and all his servants on earth have conspired to overthrow the growing kingdom of our Lord—but they have never succeeded.

Think, my Brothers and Sisters, what the power of God must be which has kept the Church alive under fiery persecutions, rescued it from the fangs of the Inquisition, preserved it from the poison of heresy and the pestilence of infidelity! And, what is more amazing, enabled it to survive the horrible dragon of Popery which has altogether threatened to carry away the Church with the blasphemies which it pours out of its mouth! Yet the chosen seed live on and are multiplied in the land, even as it is promised in the 36th verse of the Psalm before us: “His seed shall endure forever, and His Throne as the sun before Me.” The establishment and continuation of the Church is an extraordinary proof of Divine power!

So are all the conquests of Christ, some of which we have seen and more of which are to come. “I will beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him,” is the Divine promise. “I will make Him My First-Born, higher than the kings of the earth. I will set His hand, also, in the sea and His right hand in the rivers.” Glory be to God, Christ is still triumphant! Still in the preaching of His Truth He rides forth conquering and to conquer! The Gospel has not lost its old force, but whenever it is preached in faith it wins the day.

See what power it has in drawing together the multitudes and holding them in breathless attention. A man has nothing to do but to preach Christ simply, and with all his might, and the people will hear it! We need no endowment of the State! We seek no acts of Parliament to help us. Give us a clear stage and no favor! An open Bible and an earnest tongue—and the people shall yet be awakened and the multitude shall bow before the people’s King. Jesus Christ is still the mightiest name which can be pronounced by mortal tongue! Its all-subduing power shall yet be felt in the remotest regions of the earth!

Beloved, I have not time to do more than say that the great power of God’s Grace is embodied in Christ’s mighty intercession. See verse 26— “He shall cry unto Me, You are My father, My God, and the rock of My salvation.” This makes Him mighty to save—“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” I should like to have an hour to expound upon the gracious power of God as seen in the intercession of Christ! Omnipotence dwells in every plea that falls from those dear lips, as the eternal Son pleads His own merits with the everlasting Father!

Beloved, the power of Christ is well-known to many of you. Did it not call you from the dead? Has not it kept you from going down into the Pit? Is there not such power in His name that it makes your heart to leap? If we speak of anything else, you listen to it and glide into sleep. But if you hear about Him, does it not stir the very deeps of your soul? Have you not often, when you felt faint and weary, sprung to your feet with exultation at the very thought of Him? Has not His Presence made your sick bed soft and, what you thought your dying couch to be, a throne whereon you sat and reigned as in the heavenly places?—

*“Jesus, the very thought of You  
With transport fills my breast.”*

You know it is so! The power of Jesus’ name, who can measure it? And what will be your sense of His power when you reach another  
world—when He shall have brought you into His rest, even you who were  
so unworthy? When He shall reveal in you all the majesty of His goodness? When Heaven shall be yours and all its boundless plains and  
golden streets—and when, looking around, you shall find all your Christian Brethren there, without exception, as many as loved the Lord below,  
all safely gathered into the fold at last? What a shout shall sound  
throughout Heaven when the armies of the living God shall assemble and  
find not a soldier missing! They shall read the muster-roll and Little Faith  
shall be found there, and Ready-to-Halt shall be there without his  
crutches, and Miss Much-Afraid shall be there, and Mistress Despondency shall be there—each able to answer to his or her own name and  
say, “Here I am.”  
Satan has not devoured a single lamb of all the flock, nor slain a single  
man of all the host! All along the line Jesus has been victorious! When  
you shall see the whole host assembled and remember the struggles  
through which each one of them came, the tribulation through which they  
waded to their crowns, you will exclaim with rapture, “You have a mighty  
arm, strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand!” All glory be to Jehovah Jesus, our almighty Savior!  
III. Now this brings me to my conclusion and here we have to answer  
the question—HOW IS THIS POWER TO BE PRACTICALLY RECOGNIZED? If you will practically carry out what I say, a few words will suffice. First, if the power of God is so great, yield to it. Man, do you hope to  
resist God? Have you an arm like God’s and can you thunder with a voice  
like His? Throw down those weapons and cease to wage a hopeless war!  
Capitulate at once, surrender at discretion. Oh, if there is a man here who  
is the enemy of God, I beseech him to count the cost before he continues  
the war, and see whether he is able to brave it out with God! Shall wax  
fight with fire, or twigs contend with the flame? He would go through a  
host of such as you are, O man, as fire burns up the stubble, and before  
you have time to think of it, you shall be utterly destroyed!  
“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His  
wrath is kindled but a little.” The next practical use is this—is God so  
strong? Then trust Him to save you. Never say that He cannot snatch you  
from perdition! Never doubt His power to save, even in extremity. I have  
shown you that He has treasured up His gracious power in the Person of  
His Son Jesus Christ, therefore look unto Jesus Christ and be saved! All  
power lies with Him. He can forgive all sin and He can also subdue all iniquity, change the most depraved heart and implant every Grace in the  
soul. “Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting  
strength.”  
Next, if He is so strong, then trust Him in everything. Oh, you that are His people, never dare to distrust Him! Is His arm shortened? Cannot the Lord deliver you? Bring your burdens, your troubles, your needs, your griefs! Pour them out like water before Him. Let them flow forth at the foot of the Almighty and they shall pass away and you shall sing, “The Lord is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.” Is God so strong, then shake off all fear of man. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die? Man is but grass, withered in an hour— why should you tremble at his frown? He is crushed before the moth— why, then, fear him? Let not the faces of proud men confuse you. Trust in God and fear not, for the mighty God of Jacob is with us and greater is He  
that is for us than all they that can be against us.  
And now as to your service, to which you are called by the Lord. If He is  
so strong, do not think of your own weakness any longer, except as being  
a platform for His strength! Have you only one talent? God’s Holy Spirit is  
not limited in power. He can make your one talent as fruitful as another  
man’s ten! Are you weak as water? Then rejoice this day and glory in infirmity, because the power of God shall rest upon you. Think not of what  
you can do—that is a very small affair—but consider what He can do by  
you! He can strengthen the feeble against the strong! Behold, this day, He  
said unto you, “Behold I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument,  
having teeth: you shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and  
shall make the hills as chaff. You shall fan them, and the wind shall carry  
them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them.”  
Last of all, with regard to all the future which lies before you—is God so  
strong? Then commit it to His hands. You have a great trouble to face tomorrow—you are expecting a greater trouble, still, at the end of the week.  
Now, be not afraid, for the Lord lives to deliver you. What? Do you fear?  
Has your Counselor perished? Has your Helper failed you? How can you  
sink in the deep waters when underneath you are the everlasting arms?  
The mighty God is your refuge, how can you be in danger? Why do you  
look into the future at all? Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. God  
is the God of tomorrow as well as the God of today!  
Cease from your troubling, for it weakens you and cannot help you! It  
dishonors your God, your Savior—and thus it is evil! In patience and quietness wait for the fulfillment of His promise. Rest in Him and be at peace.  
Stand still and see the salvation of God! O Lord, glorify Yourself this  
morning in both saint and sinner, by manifesting the greatness of Your  
power, for You have a mighty arm. Strong is Your hand, and high is Your  
right hand!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 89.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—205, 89 (PART II), 679, 680. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #674 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MIGHTY ARM

NO. 674

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 4, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You have a mighty arm: strong is Your hand,  
and high is Your right hand.”  
Psalm 89:13.**

WE are, during the coming week humbly but earnestly to beseech of God for days of refreshing and seasons of revival. It is well for us at the outset distinctly to remind ourselves of the source from where all the strength must come. No genuine revival can ever arise from the flesh. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Human excitement at the utmost, and carnal zeal at its extremity, can do nothing towards the real conversion of souls. Here we are taught the lesson, “not by might nor by power.”

Disappointments ought to have taught the Church of God this lesson long ago. The many revivals which she has had which have proved to be spurious—the puffing up of excitement and not the building up of Divine Grace—all these should have driven her out of the last relic of her selfconfidence and have made her feel that it is not of herself to do anything in the Lord’s cause without His help. “Our help comes from the Lord that made Heaven and earth.” It is well to be constantly convinced of this. We must have God’s arm laid to the work or else nothing will be accomplished which will stand the solemn tests of the last great day.

Wood, hay, and stubble we may build alone, but gold, silver and precious stones are from the King’s treasury. “Without Me you can do nothing,” was the Savior’s word to His chosen Apostles! How much more applicable must it be to us who are “less than the least of all saints”! In vain your holy assemblies! In vain your earnest desires! In vain your passionate addresses! In vain your efforts of a thousand shapes! Unless God Himself shall step forth from the hiding place of His power and set Himself, a second time, to His own glorious work, no good can come of all your toils—

*“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”*

Having reminded ourselves, dear Friends, that our great strength lies in the God of Jacob, it is very comforting to notice how great this strength is. There is but one arm for us to rest upon, but blessed is the assurance—“You have a mighty arm.” Oh, if that God upon whom we have entirely to depend were stinted in might and had a limit put to His strength, we might despair! If the answer to the question, “Is the Lord’s arm waxed short?” were the doleful reply, “Yes, He is no longer mighty to save,” then we might give up the work! But stupendous strength is with the Most High! The treasury from which we draw is inexhaustible! We may come to God with the cheering confidence that we cannot possibly ask what it is not in His power to perform!

We have the mighty God of Jacob to be our arm every morning and our salvation every night. I desire to speak of our God as the Almighty Lord so that you and I may be strengthened in the work in which we are engaged for His name’s sake. In speaking upon the Divine power I shall have a few words, this morning, upon the power itself. Then a few words upon its manifestations. And then I will close up with the lessons to be derived from the power and its developments.

I. First, then, some few words about the POWER OF GOD itself, having as my drift the stirring up of Believers’ minds to ask and to expect a great display of it. In the first place, God’s power is like Himself—self-existent and self-sustained. Power in the creature is like water in the cistern. Power in the Creator is like water in the fountain. The creature is the moon which shines with

 reflected light—the Creator is the Sun whose light is not derived, springing from within Himself.

Naturally and spiritually this statement holds good. All the power that you and I have to serve God with must first come from Him! But He derives no power whatever from us. All our fresh springs are in God, but the rivers of our grace do not minister to His fullness. “My goodness extends not to you.” The mightiest of men add not so much as a shadow of increased power to the Omnipotent One. His scepter is established by its own Omnipotence. He sits on no buttressed throne, and leans on no assisting arm. His courts are not maintained by His courtiers, nor do they borrow their splendor of power from His creatures.

He is Himself the great central Source and Originator of all power. We must come, then, to His footstool, feeling that all must come from Him. We must bring nothing but our weakness, nothing but our sense of need, and come to Him crying, “O God, You are in Yourself all-sufficient. You do not need us, nor can we contribute anything to You. Now let Your ability flow into us and gird each of us poor weaklings with Your might!”

In the next place, God’s power is comprehensive, including within itself all the power which resides in all the creatures in the universe. “God has spoken once. Twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God.” When the wheels of a machine revolve there is power in every cog. But all that power originally was in the engine which sets the whole in action, and in a certain sense is still there. In a far higher sense all power dwells in the Lord, “for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.”

Whatever power there may be in the mightiest of God’s creatures is still inherent in God Himself. So, my Brethren, if the Lord shall be pleased to teach some of you how to pray and others how to exhort. If He should gird you with might and send you into the midst of this Church to work spiritual miracles for Him, the power will still be His—to be in an instant withdrawn if it so pleases Him—and especially withdrawn if you begin to sacrifice unto your own self and say, “My own arm has gotten me this victory.”

All power dwells perpetually and necessarily in the Lord Jehovah. The might which resides in any spiritual agency at this present moment, whether it is in the Book of God or in the ministry of truth, or in prayer, or in what else the Church serves the Lord—all that power is still comhended in the Most High. Come then, Beloved, let us all draw near to Him and pray that as all fullness is in Himself, He would be pleased to give it to us! And since giving it does not impoverish, but the same strength remains in Him still, let us be bold to make great drafts upon the Divine storehouse!

The power of God, I would remind you in the third place, is immutable. Whatever He did of old He is able to repeat now. His arm never did increase in strength—what more could He be than Almighty? It never did decrease—what else can we conceive Him to be than God all-sufficient? We talk of changing ages, but we must not dream of a changing God! There was the age of gold, the age of silver, and we mournfully say that we have fallen upon the age of iron—but the God of all ages—like the finest gold, abides ever more most pure and glorious!

Our God is not the God of the past only, but of the present. Think not of Him as did the Syrians, that Jehovah is God of the hills and not the God of the valleys. The era of great men had no other God than He who watches over their humble sons. He is the God of us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. There is no change in the power of the Everlasting Father! Time and age work no decay in Him. His eyes have not waxed dim, neither has His natural force abated. He is still the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God!

Let this encourage us, then, in our earnest entreaties that He would do for us like wonders to those which He worked for the early Church. Let us plead for Pentecosts, for even mightier works than Apostles saw. “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Open your mouths according to the model of the olden times and sing unto the Lord’s arm in your hearts as you sang with your lips just now*—*

*“Again your wonted prowess show,  
Be You made bare again!”*

It is for us to recollect, also that God’s power is in the fullness of it perfectly irresistible. We grant that when God puts out but little of His strength, it is with Him as it is with a man when he plays with a child. He may suffer that child to overcome him. But when God puts forth His Omnipotence, who, who is there that can stay His hand?

Proud hearts are humbled, hard hearts are broken, iron melts, and rock dissolves when the Lord visits the host—none of the men of might can find their hands! At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the horses and the chariots are cast into a dead sleep. Let this encourage us—we have only to bestir our God and all things are possible! If we shall but behold His goings forth in the sanctuary, there is nothing that by any possibility can thwart the desire of our soul or frustrate our wishes. Only plead with the Most High till you can cry with Luther, “Vici!” and we have overcome, we have conquered in prayer, and conquered altogether!

Let your cry be heard in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth—“Awake! Put on Your strength, O God! And go forth with our hosts to conflict for the glory of Your name.” And if He deigns to answer, nothing can withstand Him. This thought ought to comfort those of us who feel our weakness and think that we can do nothing—remember His strength and remember that He can do everything! If you have any kinsfolk for whom you have prayed and no answer has come, and your own exertions have been mocked at and despised, come again to the Mighty God of Jacob, for He will do His good pleasure, and in answer to your prayers He will send forth the blessing! His power is irresistible! Lay hold upon it and prevail.

Nor will it be ill for me to remind you that this power is entirely independent. I mean that it needs nothing extraneous or beyond itself to enable it to work. This power is independent of place. Do you think there was any sanctity in the upper room at Jerusalem? Behold this room is quite as sacred as that filled by the Spirit in years gone by. Dream not that the city of Jerusalem of old, in the days of the Savior, was a more proper theater for Divine working than this is. He can make London rejoice even as He did Jerusalem of old! Equally is the Divine power independent of time. Do not dream that the ages have changed so that in this day God cannot do His mighty works!

Beloved, if you can conceive of an age that is worse than another, so much the more is it a fit platform for the heavenly energy. The more difficulty—the more room for Omnipotence to show itself! There is elbow room for the great God when there is some great thing in the way and some great difficulty that He may overturn. When there is a mountain to be cast into the valley, then there is almighty work to be done! And our covenant God only needs to see work to do for His praying people and He will shortly do it. God is not dependent upon instruments any more than upon times and places. He who blessed the world by Paul and Peter can do His good pleasure by His servants now.

The Christ of the fishermen is our Christ, too! Talk not of Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli as though they were specially powerful in themselves and therefore accomplished so marvelous a work! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there are humble men and women among us whom God may just as well bless as those three mighties if it so pleases Him! Dream not that there was something about the Wesleys and Whitfield which made them the only instruments for evangelizing this nation! O God Almighty, You can bless even us!

And among the thousands of ministers who up to now may have plowed as upon a rock and labored in vain, there is no one whom God may not take and make him as a two-edged sword in His hand to smite through the hearts of His foes! Beloved, I have sometimes prayed, and do often pray that out of that little band of men whom we have in our own College—some ninety or so—He would find for Himself His arrows and fit them to the bow and shoot them to the utmost ends of the earth! And why not? Unbelief has many mournful reasons, but faith sees none!

In our classes there are women, there are men, there are children, upon whom the Lord may pour forth His Spirit so that once again our sons and our daughters shall prophesy, and our young men shall see visions, and our old men shall dream dreams! We have but to wait upon the Most High and He will honor us with success—He can work in any place, in any time, among any people, and by any instruments. Let us come with confidence to His feet and expect to see Him lay bare His mighty arms.

This power, I must not forget to say, as a gathering up of the whole, is infinite. Power in the creature must have a limit for the creature itself is finite. But power in the Creator has neither measure nor bound. I am sure, Beloved, we treat our God often as though He were like ourselves. We sit down after some defeat or disappointment, and we say we will never try again—we suppose the work allotted to us to be impossible. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Why limit the Holy One of Israel? God is not man that He should fail, nor the son of man that He should suffer defeat. Behold He touches the hills and they tremble! He touches the mountains and they smoke.

When He goes forth before His people He makes the mountains to skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What, then, can block up His path? You divided of old the Red Sea, O God, and You did break the dragon’s head in the midst of the many waters—and You can still do according to Your will—let any hinder who may. Oh, Beloved, if I may but be privileged to lift up your hearts and mine to something like a due comprehension of the infinite power of God, we shall then have come to the threshold of a great blessing! If you believe in the

 littleness of God you will ask but little and you will have but little! But enlarge your desires! Let your souls be stretched till they become wide as seven heavens and even then you shall not hold the whole of the great God! But you shall be fitted to receive more largely out of His fullness.

Ask of Him that He would give the heathen unto Christ for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession—that the scepter of Jehovah shall go forth—and the monarchy of Christ shall be extended from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. It were not right, perhaps, to leave this point without observing concerning this Divine power that it is all our own, for we are told that this God is our God forever and ever. “The Lord is my portion, said my soul, therefore will I hope in Him.”

Christian, the potency which dwells in Jehovah belongs to you! It is yours to rest upon in holy trust and yours to stir up in earnest pleading. That little sinew moves the great arm—I mean the sinew of the Believer’s prayer. If you can pray, God will work. “To him that believe all things are possible.” It is not, “Can You work, O God?” But it is, “Can you believe, O Christian?” You have a mighty arm, O God, but that arm is Your people’s arm, for it is written, “He is their arm every morning, and their salvation every night.” Come, then, with confidence, you who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, for this God is our God forever and ever, and He will help us. Yes, He will help us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him!

II. Having given utterance to these few words upon his power in itself, I shall direct your attention to THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS POWER which are very varied in character and altogether innumerable in multitude. Following the leading of the Psalm rather than the natural order of things, I will remind you of God’s tremendous power in destruction. You have this in the Psalm. “You have broken Rahab in pieces as one that is slain. You have scattered Your enemies with Your strong hand.”

Look back with solemn awe upon the works of God in the overthrow of sin. See the whole earth deluged with destructive floods. “You have a mighty arm, O God.” You have unloosed the gates that shut in the sea. Greater than Samson You have borne away both posts and bar and all and set free the hosts of waters that they might overthrow Your foes. Up from their cavernous prison house the furious waters leap to desolate the sin-polluted world. Noah might have sung as he floated on that shoreless sea, “You have a mighty arm.”

Cast your eyes yonder to the East, to the well-watered plain of Sodom, and mark how God’s anger smokes. He comes down to see if it is altogether according to the cry thereof, and when Justice has proved her point, then Judgment follows with swift feet. He rains Hell’s torments out of Heaven upon sinners—fiery hail and brimstone cover the cities of the plain—and the smoke goes up to Heaven. “You have a mighty arm.”

Let your eyes glance along the banks of the Nile where haughty Pharaoh vaunts himself against the Most High. Remember how He smote the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength! Let the terrible overthrow of the Red Sea never be forgotten. See how He scattered Amalek as chaff before the wind. Mark how He drove out the Hivites and the Jebusites and gave their necks to the feet of His children who were His avengers. Talk to one another and tell how He smote Philistia, how He made the sons of David cast forth their shoes upon Edom and gave Moab to be the wash pot of their feet.

Let the name of Sennacherib come up before you and think how the Lord thrust a bit into his mouth and a hook into his jaws and made him go back the way by which he came. Remember Babylon and the heaps thereof! Nineveh, and the owls and the dragons that haunt her ruined walls. Remember the proud cities of Greece, cast down and destroyed because they worshipped idols! And Rome, herself, only living like a widow in her weeds, weeping because God has bereaved her of her glory. “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder. He burns the chariots in the fire.” Who is a God in might to be compared unto Him?

As we survey the works of His power in destruction, let the subject make us grateful. What a marvel that He has not struck us! My Soul, remember when you did defy Him? When you did scorn His Grace, break His Sabbaths and blaspheme His name? Yet He who breaks the ships of Tarshish by His strong east wind has not shipwrecked you, but on the sea of life you sail securely still. O Sinner! Remember that this long-suffering will not last forever! Beware, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver you! He is strong to destroy and condemned souls feel that He is so.

If I could catch the distant sounds that rise from Hell, I think they might be rendered into this one line—“You have a mighty arm!” Oh, how He destroys! Imagination fails to picture the terror of His blows. The day of mercy is over with the condemned and they writhe in extreme agonies! While with almighty hands, armed with an iron rod, He smites, and smites, and smites again. “You have a mighty arm.” Oh, bow before Him, you who have not loved Him! Tremble at Him! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

You cannot face it out with Him—neither can you escape Him. You cannot set yourselves in battle array against the Almighty. Let the thorns set themselves in battle against the fire, but do not attempt to stand against Him—

*“O sinners, seek His face  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the scepter of His Grace,  
And find salvation there.”*

Looking at this part of the subject, here is a very strong argument for the people of God to stir them up to pray. The fearful nature of the sinner’s doom should arouse us to vehement and abiding earnestness. Must we not plead with God when we think of our fellow creatures who are liable to prove the terror of the Almighty’s arm?

Will you not cry, you that have hearts not altogether turned to stone? Will you not plead with all your hearts, you who have any loving tenderness and generous pity within you? Will you not cry aloud and spare not, that He would be pleased to give men right reason to see their danger and turn them to Himself, that they may be washed in the Savior’s blood and escape the terrible wrath due their iniquities?

Turning from the subject, the Psalm reminds us of the manifestation of God’s power in creation. “The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours: as for the world and the fullness thereof, You have founded them. The north and the south You have created them.” Now, Beloved, it is well to remember the mighty power of God in creation. Man wants something to work upon—give him material and with cunning instruments he straightway makes for himself a vessel. But God began with nothing, and by His word alone out of nothing made all things. He used no instrument except His own word. “He spoke, and it was done as He commanded, and it stood fast.”

Darkness and chaos lay in the way before Him, but these soon gave place to the excellence of His might when He said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” “In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them.” He garnished the heavens with the crooked serpent and the bear, and led forth Arcturus with his sons. How rapid was that work, and yet how perfect—how gloriously complete! Well might “the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy”!

Now, Christian, I want you to draw living water out of this well. The God, who in the old creation did all this—can He not work today? What if in the human heart there is nothing to help Him? He made the world out of nothing—can He not make new creatures without the aid of human will? Even out of these stones, can He not raise up children unto Abraham? His word fashioned the creation of old, and His word can still work marvels. Spoken by whomever He pleases to send, His word shall be as potent now as in primeval days. There may be darkness and confusion in the sinner’s soul—a word shall remove all—and swift and quick, requiring not even six days!

God can make new creatures in this House of Prayer and throughout this city! The Lord has but to will it with His Omnipotent will, and the sinner becomes a saint and the most rebellious cast down their weapons. Oh let creation encourage you to expect a new creation! The old creation had no blood upon it to plead with God to work, but we have the blood of Jesus to be our plea when we come before Him with regard to the new creation. We may cry, “O God, since You have given Your dear Son to lay the foundations of this new earth and these new heavens, wherein righteousness does dwell, come and build up Your Church, and complete the last and noblest work of Your hands.”

Again, God’s power is manifest, dear Friends, to our joy in works of sustentation as well as of creation. The next stanza of the Psalm seems to hint at that: “Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name.” That is to say, when the showers come dropping upon Tabor and Hermon, they send forth the perfume of their flowers and produce the abundance for the flocks. Now, Beloved, God’s power has been seen, I am sure, not only in holding up the world, but in preserving His Church in the world all these years.

He would be thought to be a mighty man who held up the monument of London on the palm of his hand. But You bear up, O God, the pillars of the heavens! And he who should take up St. Paul’s and turn it uppermost as though it were but a cup in his hand would be exceeding mighty. But You take up the isles as a very little thing! What must be the power of God in sustaining and supporting all worlds? But as I have said, the spiritual power which preserves the spark of the Truth of God in the midst of a sea of error is equally great! To keep His sheep alive in the midst of wolves is equally marvelous!

The mighty arm of God has been conspicuous in supporting His Church in years gone by. How the Lord has been in that gallant vessel! Never a boat more tempest-tossed than she! No voyage more dangerous than hers! She has tracked a narrow channel between threatening rocks and hidden quicksand. As for her crew, they have been a feeble folk, little able to cope with boisterous elements and furious tempests. Often the good vessel of the Church has mounted up to Heaven upon the crown of an outrageous billow, and then has gone down again into the depths of a yawning sea while her sailors have reeled like drunken men, staggering to and fro, being at their wits’ end! But they have cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He who was strong to stir up the deep from its very bottom and make it boil like a pot has been equally strong to speak the word and still the raving of its waves.

Let us be, then, of good comfort. Why should not God bless and succor His well-beloved Church now? Why should He not make her in these peaceful days to be a Palace Beautiful for Himself to dwell in? For the fair edification of His Church new converts are needed. There can be no building up of her walls except by the quarrying of fresh stones. O God, we have confidence in You that You will help us! Strong is Your hand. You have a mighty arm! Oh come, for the sustaining and increase of Your Church, even in this, our day!

But, Beloved, the most striking manifestation of Divine power is found in the fourth form of it, namely, in works of redemption. Typical of these was the great redeeming work at the Red Sea, and hence the song of Moses is joined with the song of the Lamb. It was by Moses’ rod that God brought forth the hosts of His beloved, and in mightier fashion and to a nobler tune shall the elect sing when they have been redeemed from all their enemies. Think, dear Friends, of the mighty arm of God in working out the means of our salvation. That was no light labor which Jesus undertook. Hercules cleaned the Augean stable, said the fable, but what an Augean stable is this world!

Yet Christ will purge it. He is purging it! He did purge it by His death! This Aceldama shall yet become an Elysium. The field of blood shall be transformed into a garden of delights. Christ came to bear a load upon His shoulders compared with which the burden of Atlas is as nothing! Atlas, according to the heathen mythology, bore the world between his shoulders—but Jesus bears the world’s sin, and that is more! Can you see Him there in the garden? Great drops of sweat prove what a tremendous toil He has undertaken!

Do you see Him on the Cross? Not a bone is broken, but every bone is dislocated to prove how great the labor. But how greater still the strength which achieved the whole! O Lord Jesus! When we see that You have burst the gates of death, that You have trod on the neck of sin, that You have broken the head of Satan, that You have led captivity captive and opened the gates of Heaven to all Your people, we may, indeed, sing—

*“You have a mighty arm.”*  
Just now we have most to do with the application of this redemption by the Spirit of God, for it concerns that for which we pray. We have no reason to ask our Lord Jesus to finish the work of redemption, for He has completed it—on the Cross He said, “It is finished.”

III. It is the application of it which concerns our souls. And, Beloved in the faith, it is a great joy to us to know that in bringing souls to Christ by the Holy Spirit, the Omnipotence of God is very graciously displayed. Let us just a minute or two think of some sure tokens of this, and this shall furnish us with the third point, namely, THE LESSONS FROM THE WHOLE.

There have been vouchsafed in the past very wonderful manifestations of Divine favor. Churches have grown very lukewarm, ministers very dull, doctrines have become unsound, the hearts of God’s people have failed, the faithful have almost died out—but all of a sudden God has raised up some one man, perhaps some half dozen—and the face of the Church was changed from languor to energy! These men did but strike the spark and the flame flew over all lands.

The Reformation was a marvelous type of genuine revivals—God-given revivals—which have been frequent in all times. In England we have had them. In America they have been abundant. Ireland has not been without them. In the darkest day, when everyone said the cause of religion was growing hopeless, then the great Lover of the Church has appeared. Have you never read the story of Livingstone preaching in a heavy shower of rain, outside the village of Shotts, to the multitude of people standing there who would not stir from the hearing of the Word?

Or have you not heard the story of Whitfield’s mighty preaching, when the people moved to and fro, as the corn is moved by the summer wind, and at last fell down beneath the Word as the sheaves fall before the reaper’s scythe? Why may we not see all this again? Why not? And why not greater things than these? What hinders but our unbelief? O God, You have a mighty arm! Tens of thousands beneath one ministry have been made to feel the power of the Cross, and why not again? Let us proclaim a crusade! Let us gather together in prayer and besiege the Throne, and we shall see again a revival that shall make the age glad!

God has proven the power of His arm in the persons whom He has saved. Saul of Tarsus seemed to be a very hard case, but the light from Heaven, and the Voice which gently upbraided, had power over Saul and he became one of the ablest of God’s servants. There is no heart so hard but what God’s hammer can dash it in pieces. Let us never despair while we can say of our God, “You have a mighty arm.” Beloved, if there should happen to come within these walls at any time, some of the worst of men, we must not think that God will not bless them. Oh no! “You have a mighty arm.”

Lord, here is a great and hard rock! Now wield Your great hammer and the sparks shall fly, and the flint stone shall be broken into pieces! Quarry Your own stones, O God, and make them fit for Your temple, for, “You have a mighty arm.” This is seen, sometimes, in the number converted. Three thousand in one day under Peter’s sermon! Why not three thousand again? Why not thirty thousand? Why not three hundred thousand in a day? There is nothing too great for us to ask for, or for God to grant!

He could, if He willed, turn the hearts of men as He turns the rivers by His foot. His might has been manifested in the instruments which the Lord has employed. He has taken the base things and the despised to make them the medium of His power! And then we have said, “You have a mighty arm” to do such wonders by such puny things. Now, Beloved, when I recollect the past in these various tokens of Divine strength, I wish I had time to encourage your hearts to expect great things of God. We are certainly not straitened in Him. You will be straitened in your own heart, if you are straitened at all. And I do pray my mighty Master that He may not suffer this to be, but give us large expectations that we may have large realizations!

There is a friend here who says, “I have been praying very long to this mighty God for the conversion of one who lies very near my heart, but I cannot get an answer.” No, Beloved, it may be that God has not yet put forth His power—it is certain He has not—or your friend would be healed. There may have been a reason why the Lord would not work, namely, because you were not prepared for so great a blessing. Perhaps, had He honored you to be the means of your friend’s conversion, you would have grown proud. If you now feel your own utter powerlessness, now will be the time for God to work!

The reason of delay may now have gone. Certainly the fact that God has not answered you is no reason why He should not ultimately give you your desire. If He has delayed a little time, remember He is never too late and certainly never forgets in the end. He may delay, but He cannot deny. Has your friend become worse and worse? Well, then, rampant sin often stirs up God. It is time for You to work, Lord, for they make void Your Law! I look upon the present age with very great comfort. Beloved, there never was a time in which Popery was so—I was about to say omnipresent everywhere. It is working everywhere—openly and by stealth.

The Church of England has become thoroughly putrid with Puseyism. Infidelity has grown very bold. Let all these powers of evil be developed and work their will, for good will come out of it in the end! All these provocations will arouse our God. I thought within myself, when turning over these matters and seeing the signs of a breaking out of the old moderatism in Scotland, “Ah, Lord! You have not answered Your friends. Perhaps You will hear Your foes. And if Your children’s prayers have not provoked You to bestir Yourself, perhaps the hard words of Your enemies will do it.”

It is a good thing for Zion when her enemies begin to curse and to lift up themselves against God, for then He will take up His own quarrel. Let them throw down the gauntlet and God will take it up! And we know when He does come forth from His resting place, the victory is sure! It is for us, however, to cry unto Him and spare not till He proves His cause to be His own by the potency which He puts into it. Let us, then, discard our despondencies and be of good courage, for strong is His hand and high is His right hand—

*“Lord, when iniquities abound,  
And blasphemies grow bold.  
When faith is hardly to be found,  
And love is waxing cold,  
Is not Your chariot hastening on?  
Have You not given this sign?*

***May we not trust and live upon  
A promise so Divine?”***

Beloved, I am encouraged to expect the visitation of Divine Grace among us for these reasons: It must be for God’s glory to save souls— there cannot be two opinions about it. Will He not therefore do it? Secondly, It must be due to Christ that souls should be saved. He cannot have seen the whole of the travail of His soul yet! I am sure He is not satisfied yet—He is yet to have many more! And shall He not have His seed and see His children? We can plead the blood and that is a prevalent argument with the Most High. I look upon our prayers as tokens for good. Some of us can say we came up here with prayer and our souls have been exercised during the week with groans and longings towards the mighty God of Jacob—that He would bless this congregation—and bless the world. This, too, is a token for good.

Our past history comforts me in cheering hope. “The Lord has been mindful of us. He will bless us.” Who would have thought that the Lord would bless us as He has done? It is now twelve years and more since I first came up to this great city, a stripling. With what trembling did I come! You were but very few and feeble, but still there was the true life lingering among you and soon the blessing came! You remember our sore trials and troubles, when we went through fire and through water, and men did ride over our heads. But our God has brought us out into a wealthy place. This very house is, itself, a monument of what God can do!

Poor and feeble folk were we, and yet this house was built to His praise! And He has filled it and kept it full! Where else has He been pleased to gather the multitudes year after year, with never-failing, never-flagging interest and earnestness? Where else has He been pleased to add to the Church by hundreds in the year, till the only difficulty is the time to see the inquirers and to hear their confession of faith? In what other Church have there been four hundred and fifty souls added to the fellowship in one year? Where else has the baptismal pool been stirred with such a multitude of souls immersed into a profession of the Lord Jesus Christ?

We say this not—we trust we do not—with so much as a single grain of sacrificing unto self, for what were we and what were our father’s house that He should have brought us up to now? But we beg you to regard the past as a type of the future! Oh, start not back, you men of prayer! Fail not now since God is still your arm! You carry bows, turn not back in the day of battle! You have the trophies of past victories before your eyes! Now for a mighty attack upon the Mercy Seat that you may win power to overcome the gates of Hell!

Let us be vehement—violent I was about to say—for, “the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Let us cannonade the gate of Heaven! Let us rise up, each man and each woman, every soul that has power, and let us cry unto the mighty God that He would be pleased to give us such a blessing that we shall not have room enough to receive it! It must come, only be ready for it! It will come—it comes even now! Thank God! Take courage! Be on your watchtower! And may the Lord bless us for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE GLORY OF OUR STRENGTH  
NO. 3140

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1909.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 13, 1873.

**“For You are the glory of their strength.”  
Psalm 89:17.**

THE Psalmist Ethan is here speaking of the Covenant people—the people of God, the people who know the joyful sound of the Covenant of Grace and who, therefore, walk in the Light of God’s Countenance. It is said of these persons that God is the glory of their strength. All strength of every sort comes from God. Since He is the Author of all being, it is He who gives strength to every form of existence. Read the remarkable chapters which close the Book of Job and see how God there claims to have given strength to the eagle in her lofty flight and to the horse when he paws in the valley—and leviathan and behemoth, those mighty creatures of the sea and the land! God claims to have given all the strength that there is in any of these members of the inferior creation and we are certain that He also lays an equally just claim to all the strength that there is in man. The power of the arms, the swiftness of the feet, the keenness of intellect—all these come from the Most High who has worked such wonders in the formation of the human frame! Whatever of vigor and capacity there may be in it, all must be traced to the almighty hand of God! Even the glory of man’s physical strength, whether he knows it or not, belongs to God. He makes the young man vigorous and the full-grown man mature in strength, so He ought to have the service of the strength which He has, Himself, created!

Equally is this true of all mental power. The craftsmen learn their art from God. Bezaleel and Aholiab were instructed of the Most High, “to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,” as truly as Moses was taught of God in the writing of the Law. The poet receives his power for grand conceptions from God, who is beyond all human conception! And he who is most learned in any particular science—the great discoverer, the man who measures the stars or maps the seas—receives all his mental strength from the Most High! It would be well if this were always remembered, for it often happens that men who are great in wisdom ascribe their greatness to themselves and then prostitute their native talents and their acquired knowledge to their own ambitious ends, or to some mean and groveling purpose. Oh, that all men would lay out their talents for God, for He is the great Householder who has given to one of His servants one talent, to another two and to another five talents—and who will, at His coming—require from them an account of what they have done with them! Oh, that all who are mentally strong would ascribe the glory of their strength to God!

But there is a higher and nobler form of strength than either the physical or the mental. We rise into another realm when we come to speak of spiritual things. There are some men whom God has raised up from spiritual death. When they “were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” and so He saved them from their death in sin and they have been made spiritually strong by God through the effectual working of His Son. By Divine Grace they are the sons of the Almighty God and they have become mighty through Him, so the glory of their strength is all to be ascribed to God. The Psalmist’s declaration, “You are the glory of their strength,” is true in reference to the whole of the spiritual seed—the Covenant people who are made strong in spiritual things by the Grace of God.

I. Now, in trying to lead your thoughts into the meaning of this text, I want you first of all, by way of contrast, to spend a few minutes in considering the opposite of our text. God is the glory of our strength, but what I want you now to think of is THE SHAME OF OUR WEAKNESS.

This is a very humiliating subject, but it is one that should never be far from our thoughts, for we shall never realize to the fullest, the glory of the strength which comes from God until we are deeply conscious of the shame of the weakness which is in our nature as the result of the Fall and of our own sin. What poor weak creatures we are! It is no shame to us that we have not the strength of the elephant or the lion. It is no shame to us that we have not the wings of eagles or of angels. It is no shame to us that we are often the sport of the elements, so that we shiver in the cold or are blistered in the sun. It is no shame to us that when the storm sweeps over the sea, it drives our navies before it like so many cockle-shells. It is no shame to us that there are many things in this world which are far more powerful than such a puny creature as man is! Such weakness as that which God intended us to have is no cause for shame—no, we turn to God in the full consciousness of it and remind Him that we are but animated dust and that He made us weak as we are—and intended us to be weak as we are! That is not where the shame lies. The shame lies in the moral weakness which is natural to us in our fallen state!

I mean that, left to ourselves, we are weak enough to allow our baser spirits to be our masters and our meanest capacities to have the sway over our entire nature. God has put the earth under our feet, but we often put ourselves under the earth by permitting that which is earthy to dominate us. We have a nature that, in its origin, was akin to the Divine, yet how often we allow the passions of our fallen nature to control our whole being! We let that part of our nature which is worst be supreme over that which is best, yet it should never be so. Look at the weakness of the strongest man ever born of a woman! See him lying helpless at Delilah’s feet and there committing suicide for I can call it by no other name—by revealing the secret of his strength and so delivering himself into the hands of the Philistines! Look at the weakness of the wisest man who ever lived and see how Solomon’s heart was turned aside from God! Look at the weakness of one of the best of men who ever lived, the man who was as great as a saint as he was as a poet—David, the sweet singer of Israel—who was weak as water when left to himself! I need not mention other cases. God grant that we may not, ourselves, become instances of such weakness! But we have been, I do not doubt, in some way or other, foolish enough to let our baser passions consent to sin while our nobler spiritual nature has hated the evil thing and fought against it.

Our weakness may also be seen in another way— we are very apt to be carried away by circumstances. We think we are standing very firmly, but a very slight change in our position or condition will affect us very seriously. It is really extraordinary how easily a holy man, who has been truly communing with God, will be put out of temper by a circumstance so infinitesimal in importance that he would be ashamed to have it known that he had been influenced by it! I think some of you must have known what it has been to have close fellowship with God and yet, afterwards, the merest trifle in the household has sufficed to rob you of all the good you had gained. Possibly if God should give you, at this service, a very special manifestation of His Presence and you were to meet with a great trial at home, you would be enabled to bear it with equanimity. Yet some little insignificant thing—I shall not conjecture what may cause you to lose your temper or put you off your guard in some other respect, or cause you to become concerned about other things than the highest and best things and effectually bring you down from your privileged position as follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to the common level—I was about to say of an ordinary worldling! Oh, how weak we are! How weak we are in such a case as that!

It is also amazing to think how good men have been led into sin and overcome by the very smallest adversary. Look at Peter, for instance— bold, lion-hearted Peter. Who was it that led him to deny his Master? If some huge Roman legionary had come up to him with his drawn sword and said to him, “You Galilean, if you dare to say, ‘I know Jesus,’ this sword shall smite off your head,” I should not wonder but that Peter would have been equal to that emergency and certainly he would have wished to have in his hand the sword with which he cut off the ear of Malchus so that he might at least defend himself. If the high priest had pointed to Peter and said, “I believe that yonder stands one of the men who were with Jesus of Galilee,” it may be that he would have been bold enough to confess his Lord. But it was only a damsel, one of the high priest’s maids who saw him as he was warming himself at the fire, and who said to him, “You, also, were with Jesus of Galilee”—and he denied it—and so the strong man was overcome! It is thus that little foes have frequently mastered us where great foes could not do so. I think it was Admiral Drake who, in a storm at the Nore, said to his sailors, “Surely we have not braved many tempests out in the open sea to come here to be drowned in a ditch.” Yet it has often been so. Men who have done business in great waters, (who have encountered huge Atlantic waves of temptation), have nevertheless been allured into sin by a temptation that was utterly contemptible! And perhaps it was just because it seemed to them so contemptible that they became carnally secure and so it proved to be doubly dangerous to them. But oh, what weak creatures we must be when trifling circumstances can turn us aside and when little things suffice to conquer us!

One thing in which we all betray our littleness is the readiness with which we fall into the gross sin of idolatry. We are, none of us, likely to bow down before blocks of wood and stone as the heathen do. Nor are we likely to worship the god made of bread which is the god of so many in this country—yet we are all too prone to make unto ourselves gods that are really idols! At one time it is favorite child who is thus worshipped. “There never was a fairer child than mine. She is more like an angel than a human being,” says the fond and foolish mother whose heart is wrapped up in her little one! Then comes God’s great hammer that breaks all idols—and the dead child is carried to the silent tomb. After such a painful experience as that, will the mother ever make an idol of another child? Yes, there are some who have done that, to their own confusion, time after time! If it has not been a little child who has been thus idolized, it may have been the partner of one’s own life. Perhaps it has been some cherished idea which we have pursued with such avidity that it has became a god to us. It is very, very easy to put your trust in an arm of flesh—either your own or somebody else’s. But as soon as you do that, you bring yourself under that ancient curse, “Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord”—for all trust in the creature is a subtle form of idolatry! After we have trusted in the creature once, twice, 20 times and been deceived, will we do it again? Yes, for such is the shame of our weakness that we still turn away from the eternal arm which can never fail us and cling to that poor puny arm of man that is often as false as it is weak! We still we make gods of things that are not gods, for, like the children of Israel, we are weak as water in this point also!

There is another thing that shows the shame of our weakness, namely, our unbelief. Have you never caught yourself saying, “After this, I shall never have a doubt again”? I have frequently found some such expression as that come to my lips, for I have had such extraordinary deliverances and such proofs of God’s gracious loving kindness that when I have received them, I have said, “Oh, what a blessed God! Oh what a faithful God! Oh, what a prayer-answering God!” And then the thought has come, “The next time I am in trouble, I shall not be so timorous and so unbelieving!” Yet I fear that many of you will have to join me in confessing with deep shame and confusion of face that it has only needed a new trial to come to us to cause us to find out that what we thought was strength was utter weakness! Have not you also found it so? Why, we are weaker even than our own children, for our children can and do trust their father! But sometimes we, the loved ones of Heaven, cannot and do not trust our Father who has never deceived us! We may well lament the shame of our weakness.

If I were to keep on speaking of this part of my theme, I might show you that we are weak everywhere and weak in every way—weak to all good and weak in the presence of all evil if God once withdraws Himself from us. You who are most mighty in prayer, are you not sometimes weak when you are upon your knees? You who often bear testimony to Christ with much courage, are you not sometimes weak in holy boldness? You who can generally rejoice in the Lord, are you not sometimes weak and feeble through despondency? Apart from God, our whole head is sick, our whole heart is faint and we are a mass of misery and a heap of weakness!

II. Now, having spoken thus by way of converse, I hope it is a fitting preparation for our dwelling a little while upon the second point which is, according to the text, THE GLORY OF OUR STRENGTH. True Believers, though they are a very feeble folk in themselves, are very strong when God is with them! They are so strong that their strength has a great glory in it of which we will now speak. The strength of the true Christian is so great that nothing can overcome him and he is more than a conqueror in every engagement into which he enters!

What strength God gives to us, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, at the very first, when we rise out of the grave of our spiritual death. There we lie, bound hand and foot in that dark sepulcher—and a great stone is rolled over the mouth of it. The moment the Lord says to us, “Come forth,” we open our eyes and begin to discover the gloomy grave in which we lie. Then and there God gives us the power to unbind ourselves, to remove the stone and to come forth into liberty! I mean that men, quickened by Divine Grace, deliver themselves from evil habits, from customs which had bound them as with bands of iron, from inveterate sins which had held them captive as in a net! They become free from all these things in the strength of the Holy Spirit when He has regenerated them and brought them up from their spiritual captivity. The achievements of a new-born soul, in its first conflicts with its old sins, are perfectly marvelous! There are many wonders in the Christian life, but I believe that the first stroke he gives when he is but newly born and, therefore weak, has a marvelous degree of power in it. Many men have been swearers. Many have been drunkards. Many have been guilty of all manner of evil, but those old sins have been laid dead at their feet by one blow struck in the power of the ever-blessed Spirit. Truly, the glory of the strength of the new-born child of God must lie in his God!

The man being Divinely quickened, we now find him contending for the right. And wherever he contends, he overcomes! The world frowns on him and he laughs at the frown. Then it fawns on him and he despises its flattery. Sham faith soon yields to the enemy, but real faith wins the victory over the world! If the whole world should attack a true Believer, the Believer would overcome the world and break through all its toils. Faith also overcomes the flesh and that is no small victory. He who has true God-given faith in Christ contends with inbred corruptions, strong passions and the deceitfulness that is engrained within the human heart. Where the life of God is in the heart, there is strength given to overcome the flesh. Though the man may have been sensual and devilish before conversion, Divine Grace is more than a match for the flesh and Grace gains the victory! It is a great thing to be able to overcome the world, the great world without and the little world within—but Satan comes into the field and sets himself among those who are arrayed against the Believer—and, blessed be God, the devil fares badly in the fight, for many a time the dread Apollyon who has stretched himself across the way and said that he would slay the saint, has himself been pierced by the Sword of the Spirit and has fled away wounded! What strength there must be in the Believer when he is able to overcome that accursed trinity of antagonists—the world, the flesh and the devil!

When God is in him, the Christian finds himself able to do anything. “By You,” says David, “I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall.” And God said, “Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel, I will help you, says the Lord” and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. “Behold, I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and beat them small.” Weak as we are, with God’s help, nothing is impossible for us! What feats of valor some Believers have performed! Read the histories of the saints of the olden ages and think of the Apostles and their immediate followers. What strength was theirs and it was only faith that made them strong! You have read Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, perhaps, till you have felt your blood boil with indignation and you have shut the book up and said, “I can read no more of the dreadful story lest it should disturb my dreams.” But if you cannot even bear to think of the tortures which the saints underwent, what must it have been for them to bear them so heroically as they did? Women and even children defied their tormentors and there were saints who, in the midst of the fire, bravely quoted verses of Scripture against their persecutors and with holy joy sang Psalms in the midst of the flames! How the saints baffled Nero, Domitian and other cruel tyrants! The Inquisition, in its dreary vaults, almost rivaled Hell in its pains and torments, but it was not able to quench the noble spirit of God’s faithful servants! The persecutors may do what they will, but only give us a band of men and women who have God’s Spirit in them—and even though their foes may tear them limb from limb—they shall not conquer them! It is impossible that God’s true saints should be overcome, for they have a glory of strength that nothing can destroy!

Neither persecution, nor tribulation, nor nakedness, nor distress, nor famine, nor peril, nor sword, no, nor even death, itself, has been able to make the saints deny their Master! And we see the same strength upholding them still! I have, in my mind’s eye now, one dear Sister, a member of this Church, in whom I have seen, within the last few days, the matchless way in which the saints can conquer death. When they have been almost worn out by disease and incessant pain. When sleep has been banished from their eyes. When their whole body has been only a road for the feet of pain to traverse—even then they have never been impatient and they have rejoiced in the prospect of departure—not merely because they wished to be free from pain, but because the Presence of Christ had already made them so happy that they longed to get to the fountainhead of those sweet streams which were even then making them glad! Death has never yet conquered a saint! The children of God have all been conquerors. Every sepulcher of a saint is but another monument of the victory of faith! “These all died in faith,” might be inscribed over the vast mausoleum of Believers—and then the palm branch might be put at the bottom of the inscription, for, dying in faith, they, every one of them, achieved the victory!

Let me add that God’s servants have a glory of strength which I must not even mention without much humbleness of heart. God’s people are, through His Grace, so strong that they not only overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, but they overcome God Himself. Oh, matchless mystery, that the Omnipotent should yield to the Believer ’s strength! Do you ask, “How is this?” Let me remind you of the Brook Jabbok and the memorable wrestling there when the Divine Wrestler said to Jacob, “Let Me go, for the day breaks,” but the brave man of faith replied, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.” And so he won the blessing—and with it came that new name, so full of meaning—“Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Truly did Joseph Hart, write, concerning Godgiven faith—

*“It treads on the world and on Hell!  
It vanquishes death and despair!  
And what is still stranger to tell  
It overcomes Heaven by prayer!”*

Surely there is a great glory in the strength of a Christian when even Heaven is moved by the pleading voice of a true Believer!

III. Now let us notice, in the third place—and may the Spirit of God give His own unction and power with the thought!—that Believers, thus having God-given strength, know that ALL THE GLORY OF THEIR STRENGTH LIES IN GOD.

I hope you have understood this Truth of God even while I have been speaking about it, for it is true that the Christian has no other strength than that which has come from God. It is so in every individual Christian. The glory of any strength that he has must be given to God because God has given that strength to him. Have you all learned this lesson yet or are any of you proud of anything that you are, or of anything that you have done? Have you not yet learned the Truth of the text, “You are the glory of their strength”? Have you been foolish enough to say, “I preach well,” or, “I work well,” or, “I suffer well,” or, “I am growing in Grace, so there is some credit due to me?” Dear Brother, if you talk like that, may the Lord deliver you from all such delusions! He is the glory of our strength—let us keep to that and never get away from it, for the Lord our God is a jealous God and He is especially jealous of His own glory! And if He sees that we give that glory to ourselves, or to any other but Himself, He will take away from us the strength that He gave and make us cry out once again because of our weakness. So do not destroy your own strength by taking the glory of it to yourself. Oh, how many a man has flung himself from the battlements of his pulpit by beginning to feel that he did it and that he had some strength of his own! How many a professor has marred a life of consistency in one dark hour—and the reason has been that selfsufficiency and carnal security were hidden away in his bosom—and at last betrayed him. When you are strong, then are you weak. But when you are conscious of weakness, then are you truly strong! While you lay the crown at the feet of Him who gave you the strength to win it, you will always be made strong. But as soon as you begin putting the crown on your own head, your strength shall be taken from you and if, like Samson, you go out to shake yourself as at other times, you will find that the Lord has departed from you to chasten you for your pride!

Further, what is true of individual Christians is also true of a Church. And I want to impress this Truth upon the members of this Church and upon the members of all other Churches. When God makes a Church strong, it is a very blessed and glorious thing—but the glory and strength of every Church must always lie in God. It never lies in the fact that there are many wealthy persons belonging to it. If God ever sees His people worshipping the golden calf, He will send a plague upon them to punish them for their idolatry! The glory of a Church must never lie in the fact that there are certain persons of intelligence connected with it. I believe that is the worm at the root of many Churches and that it will lead to their decay. Everything is done with the view of pleasing two or three people who are supposed to be very intellectual—yet those very people, if they are the Lord’s people—do not need “intellectual preaching” at all! They have enough work for their intellect on the other six days of the week and they need the simple Gospel—plain spiritual food for their souls to feed upon on the Sabbath! There are a great many ministers who cause their hearers to break the fourth commandment for the labor involved in hearing them preach is indeed terrible—it must rack the soul instead of resting it! I should like to see a Lord’s-Day Rest Society established to keep the people’s mind at rest instead of their being tortured with all manner of quibbles and questions! They need to hear of Jesus Christ, for He is the true Rest for the soul and it is the very essence of the Divine Commandment to leave your own work and to rest in Christ! That is the way to keep the Sabbath holy and he who has not done that cannot know the true Sabbath rest which is the portion only of those who are resting in the Lord Jesus Christ!

So it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in the wealthy people or the intelligent people. And it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in fine elocution. “The wisdom of words” appears to have strength in it, but when it makes the Cross of Christ of no effect, it is sheer weakness! It was one of the worst days that ever dawned upon the Church of Christ when it began to cultivate the art of oratory and turned aside to “enticing words of man’s wisdom.” But when men speak out of an overflowing soul of what God has done for them, that is the power which the Spirit of God gives to them and the power which He will bless to their hearers! They do not then try to use out-of-the-way words and nicely rounded sentences, nor to pile up perorations—for that is magnifying the preacher and dishonoring the Word that has come out of the mouth of God!

The glory of our strength must never lie in any of these things—it must lie in God alone. If it does so lie, then we shall glory in the Gospel which is one of the great supports of our strength! We shall glory in the Cross of Christ which is the main strength of the Gospel. And we shall glory in the Holy Spirit, who alone can raise the spiritually dead, who alone can give the eyes that look to Christ upon the Cross and who alone can make the heart long after its Redeemer! O Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have need to pray for God the Holy Spirit to work mightily among us! We have the Holy Spirit still with us, so we have no need to pray that He would come down from Heaven. He came down at Pentecost and He never went back to Heaven, so He is still here. He is in all His people! He is in this assembly right now. He dwells among us, though we are apt to forget that He does. We reckon that the glory of our strength lies in our ministers, or in our organizations, or in our creeds. We forget that the glory of our strength is spiritual and lies in the Holy Spirit, Himself, who is in us and who shall be forever in us if we are truly the Lord’s! Cry mightily in prayer, Beloved, that this true glory of our strength may continually be revealed in our midst as a Church, for so often we restrain Him, grieve Him and bind Him, as it were, with chains! He cannot do many mighty works among us because of our unbelief. He withholds His richest blessings because of our sinfulness. Let us turn to Him again! O Lord, turn us and we shall be turned, and then we shall see the glory of our strength among us, and we shall give all the glory to Him who gives to us all our strength!

I offered a prayer, this evening, (and I prayed in faith), that the Lord would, in His mercy, save some souls tonight. And I expect to hear that He has done so. I do not expect that blessed fact to remain concealed until we get to Heaven, but I expect to know tonight that same of my hearers have come and found rest in Jesus!

I think I hear someone say, “I would gladly be saved, but I am so weak.” But the almighty Savior came to save weak sinners! “Oh, but I am so weak I do not feel any repentance.” But Christ was exalted to give repentance! O poor weak ones, it is to just such as you are that Jesus says, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” It is but a look that is needed—and even that the Holy Spirit gives you! He gives it to you now—He enables you now to look to Jesus, the great atoning Sacrifice! And as you look, you are saved in a moment, saved through His Grace by that simple looking unto Jesus! Oh, to leap out of death into life, out of thick darkness into unutterably glorious light in one moment! I pray that the Holy Spirit may speak to many a soul here through the words that I am now uttering. “Awake, you that sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” The Lord grant that it may be so— and to Him shall be the glory, for He is the glory of our strength. Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 89:1-38.**

Verses 1, 2. I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish

in the very heavens. [See Sermon #1565, Volume 26—MASCHIL OF ETHAN, A MAJESTIC SONG—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] So

far, the gracious man declares the resolution of his heart to praise his God forever and gives the reason for that resolve. Now he quotes the Lord’s Covenant with David.

3, 4. I have made a Covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David, My servant, Your seed will I establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations. Selah. That Covenant, as you well know, was not only made with David, but it had a higher spiritual bearing, for it related to that great and glorious Son of David who still reigns and shall reign forever—and in whom every Covenant blessing is secured.

5. And the heavens shall praise Your wonders, O LORD: Your faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. It is often very profitable when we are enjoying fellowship with God, for us to speak to God and then wait for God to speak to us. It is so here, you see. First the Psalmist says that he will praise God forever. Then God tells him of His Covenant and explains to him the reason why mercy shall be built up forever. And then the man of God begins to praise God again. That will give you a hint for your own private devotion. Sometimes you feel that you cannot praise God and cannot pray to Him. Well then, if you cannot speak to God, sit still and let Him speak to you! Read a portion of Scripture and then, perhaps, some suggestive verse or word in it will set you praying. And then when you have prayed, stop a little while and read again—and so a blessed conversation shall be carried on between you and your God! Thus the Psalmist takes his turn again—“And the heavens shall praise Your wonders, O Lord: Your faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.”

6, 7. For who in the Heaven can be compared unto the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared. That is, reverenced.

7-9. In the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. O LORD God of Hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto You? Or to Your faithfulness round about You? You rule the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, You still them. He lets them arise and He bids them sink down again. All the Providential dealings of God seem to be illustrated in the ever-varying phenomena of the sea. The Lord sometimes lets tempests arise in our circumstances, but soon with a Word He stills them and there is a great calm.

10. You have broken Rahab in pieces as one that is slain. The great crocodile of Egypt.  
10-12. You have scattered Your enemies with Your strong arm. The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours: as for the world and the fullness thereof, You have founded them. The north and the south You have created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name. Oh, what a blessed spirit the spirit of true devotion is! There is such life in it that it seems to quicken all inanimate creation and make the rocks and mountains sing, the trees of the woods to clap their hands and the waves of the sea to praise the great Creator! So the whole world is like a great organ and man, guided by God’s Spirit, puts his fingers on the keys and wakes the whole world to the thunder of adoration and praise! Oh to be taught of God to have a praiseful heart, for then all around us will be more likely to also praise Jehovah!

13, 14. You have a mighty arm. [See Sermons #674, Volume 12—THE MIGHTY ARM and #1314, Volume 22 which has the same title—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of Your Throne: mercy and Truth shall go before Your face. There are wells of joy in this verse to those who know how to draw it up. It is a great delight to every man who is oppressed to know that justice and judgment stand, like armed sentinels, on either side of the Throne of God and to every human soul, conscious of unworthiness, it is an unspeakable delight that Mercy and Truth, like royal heralds, go before God wherever He goes! It has been well said that a God of all mercy would be an unjust God—but a God of all justice without mercy would be terrible, indeed!

15-21. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Your Countenance. In Your name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Your righteousness shall they be exalted. For You are the glory of their strength: and in Your favor our horn shall be exalted for the LORD is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. Then You spoke in vision to Your holy one, and said, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him: with whom My hand shall be established: My arm also shall strengthen him. David was a great blessing to the nation over which God made him king. Among the choicest gifts that God ever gives to men are men and, therefore, we read concerning Christ, “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men”—and those gifts were men, for, “He gave some, Apostles and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” These were the choice ascension gifts of Christ! Yet, while these verses primarily refer to David, the king of Israel, we must believe that a greater than David is here, even Christ, who deigns to call Himself God’s Servant, who has been anointed by the Spirit of God, with whom God’s hand is always established and who is ever strengthened by the arm of Omnipotence.

22-25. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face and plague them that hate him. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him: and in My name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea and his right hand in the rivers. Do not believe, dear Friends, any of the prophecies that some men make concerning the destruction of the Kingdom of Christ and the failure of His Church—but be certain that the Lord will not suffer Christ to fail or be discouraged—and rest assured that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands! The history of the Church of Christ is a history of conflict, but it shall be a history of victory before it is completed—“I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.”

26-34. He shall cry unto Me, You are my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and My Covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of Heaven. If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, or alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. If, then, you are in the Covenant, you will have the rod—you may rest sure of that! If you do not walk in God’s ways, but break His statutes, you will not be allowed to go unchastened. If a father saw some boys in the street breaking windows or otherwise misbehaving themselves—and he gave one of the boys a box on the ears, you may be pretty certain that the boy is his own son. And when God sees men doing wrong, He often permits the wicked to go unpunished in this life—but as for His own people, it is written, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Our heavenly Father’s hand still holds the rod and uses it when necessary—but it is in love that He corrects us. Let us, therefore, when He chastens us, plead the Covenant that is here recorded and say to Him, “You have said, ‘Nevertheless My loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.’”

35-37. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in Heaven. Selah.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE PEOPLE’S CHRIST  
NO. 11

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 25, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“I have exalted one chosen out of the people.”  
Psalm 89:19.**

ORIGINALLY, I have no doubt, these words referred to David. He was chosen out of the people. His lineage was respectable, but not illustrious. His family was holy, but not exalted—the names of Jesse, Obed, Boaz and Ruth awoke no royal recollections and stirred up no remembrances of ancient nobility or glorious pedigree. As for himself, his only occupation had been that of a shepherd boy, carrying lambs in his bosom, or gently leading the ewes great with young—a simple youth of a right royal soul and undaunted courage, but yet a plebeian—one of the people. But this was no disqualification for the crown of Judah. In God’s eyes the extraction of the young hero was no barrier to his mounting the throne of the holy nation, nor shall the proudest admirer of descent and lineage dare to insinuate a word against the valor, wisdom and the justice of the government of this monarch of the people!

We do not believe that Israel or Judah ever had a better ruler than David and we are bold to affirm that the reign of the man “chosen out of the people” outshines in glory the reigns of high-bred emperors and princes with the blood of a score of kings running in their veins! Yes, more—we will assert that the humility of his birth and education, so far from making him incompetent to rule, rendered him, in a great degree, more fit for his office and able to discharge its mighty duties. He could legislate for the many, for he was one of themselves—he could rule the people as the people should be ruled, for he was “bone of their bone” and “flesh of their flesh”—their friend, their brother, as well as their king!

However, in this sermon we shall not speak of David, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, for David, as referred to in the text, is an eminent type of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who was chosen out of the people. Jesus is He of whom His Father can say, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.”

Before I enter into the illustration of this Truth I wish to make one statement, so that all objections may be avoided as to the Doctrine of my sermon. Our Savior Jesus Christ, I say, was chosen out of the people— but this merely respects His Manhood. As “very God of very God” He was not chosen out of the people—for there was none except Him! He was His Father’s only-begotten Son, “begotten of the Father before all worlds.” He was God’s Fellow, co-equal and co-eternal—consequently when we speak of Jesus as being chosen out of the people, we must speak of Him as a Man. We are, I conceive, too forgetful of the real Manhood of our Redeemer, for a Man He was to all intents and purposes—and I love to sing—

*“A Man there was, a real Man*

*Who once on Calvary died.”*  
He was not Man and God amalgamated—the two Natures suffered no confusion—He was very God without the diminution of His essence or attributes. And He was equally, verily and truly, Man. It is as a Man I speak of Jesus this morning! And it rejoices my heart when I can view the Human side of that glorious miracle of Incarnation and can deal with Jesus Christ as my Brother—inhabitant of the same mortality, wrestler with the same pains and ills, companion in the march of life and, for a little while, a fellow-sleeper in the cold chamber of death!

There are three things spoken of in the text—first of all, Christ’s extraction—He was one of the people. Secondly, His election—He was chosen out of the people. And thirdly, Christ’s exaltation—He was exalted. You see I have chosen three words all commencing with the letter E, to ease your memories that you may be able to remember them the better— extraction, election, exaltation!

I. We will commence with our Savior’s EXTRACTION. We have had many complaints this week and for some weeks past, in the newspapers concerning the families. We are governed—and, according to the firm belief of a great many of us, very badly governed—by certain aristocratic families. We are not governed by men chosen out of the people, as we ought to be. And this is a fundamental wrong in our government—that our rulers, even when elected by us, can scarcely ever be elected from us. Families, where certainly there is not a monopoly of intelligence or prudence, seem to have a patent for promotion. While a man—a commoner, a tradesman, of however good sense—cannot rise to the government. I am no politician and I am about to preach no political sermon. But I must express my sympathy with the people and my joy that we, as Christians, are governed by “One chosen out of the people.” Jesus Christ is the people’s Man! He is the people’s Friend—yes, one of themselves. Though He sits high on His Father’s Throne, He was “One chosen out of the people.” Christ is not to be called the aristocrat’s Christ. He is not the noble’s Christ. He is not the king’s Christ. But He is “One chosen out of the people.” It is this thought which cheers the hearts of the people and ought to bind their souls in unity to Christ and the holy religion of which He is the Author and Finisher. Let us now beat out this wedge of gold into leaf and narrowly inspect its truthfulness!

Christ, by His very birth was one of the people. True, He was born of a royal ancestry. Mary and Joseph were both of them descendants of a kingly race but the glory had departed. A stranger sat on the throne of Judah, while the lawful heir grasped the hammer and the adze. Mark you well the place of His nativity. Born in a stable—cradled in a manger where the horned oxen fed—His only bed was their fodder and His slumbers were often broken by their longings. He might be a Prince by birth—but certainly He had not a princely retinue to wait upon Him! He was not clad in purple garments, neither wrapped in embroidered clothing. The halls of kings were not trod by His feet. The marble palaces of monarchs were not honored by His Infant smiles. Take notice of the visitors who came around His cradle. The shepherds came, first of all. We never find that they lost their way. No, God guides the shepherds and He did direct the wise men, too, but they lost their way. It often happens, that while shepherds find Christ, wise men miss Him. However, both of them came, the magi and the shepherds—both knelt round that manger, to show us that Christ was the Christ of all men—that He was not merely the Christ of the magi, but that He was the Christ of the shepherds. They showed us that He was not merely the Savior of the peasant shepherd, but also the Savior of the learned, for—

*“None are excluded hence, but those  
Who do themselves exclude.  
Welcome the learned and polite,  
The ignorant and rude.”*

In His very birth He was one of the people. He was not born in a populous city—but in the obscure village of Bethlehem, “the house of bread.” The Son of Man made His advent, unushered by pompous preparations and unheralded by the blast of courtly trumpets!

His education, too, demands our attention. He was not taken as Moses was, from his mother’s breast, to be educated in the halls of a monarch. He was not brought up with all those affected airs which are given to persons who have golden spoons in their mouths at their births. He was not brought up as the lordling, to look with disdain on everyone. His father, being a carpenter, doubtless He toiled in His father’s workshop. “Fit place,” a quaint author says, “for Jesus. For He had to make a ladder that would reach from earth to Heaven! And why should He not be the son of a carpenter?” Full well He knew the curse of Adam—“in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread.” Had you seen the Holy child Jesus, you would have beheld nothing to distinguish Him from other children, save that unsullied purity which rested in His very Countenance. When our Lord entered into public life, still He was the same. What was His rank? Did He array Himself in scarlet and purple? Oh, no—He wore the simple garb of a peasant—that robe “without seam the top to the bottom,” one simple piece of stuff, without ornament or embroidery. Did He dwell in state and make a magnificent show in His journey through Judea? No. He toiled His weary way and sat down on the well of Sychar. He was like others, a poor Man. He had not courtiers around Him. He had fishermen for His companions. And when He spoke, did He speak with smooth and oily words? Did He walk with dainty footsteps, like the king of Amalek? No. He often spoke like the rough Elijah. He spoke what He meant and He meant what He said. He spoke to the people as the people’s Man. He never cringed before great men. He knew not what it was to bow or stoop. He stood and cried, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Woe unto you, whitewashed sepulchers.” He spared no class of sinners— rank and fortune made no difference to Him. He uttered the same Truths to the rich men of the Sanhedrin, as to the toiling peasants of Galilee. He was “one of the people.”

Notice His doctrine. Jesus Christ was one of the people in His Doctrine. His Gospel was never the philosopher’s Gospel, for it is not abstruse enough. It will not consent to be buried in hard words and technical phrases—it is so simple that He who can spell over, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” may have a saving knowledge of it! Hence, worldly-wise men scorn the science of Truth and sneeringly say, “why, even a blacksmith can preach now-a-days and men who were at the plow tail may turn preachers.” And priestcraft demands, “What right have they to do any such thing, unauthorized by us?” Oh, sad case, that Gospel Truth should be slighted because of its plainness and that my Master should be despised because He will not be exclusive—will not be monopolized by men of talent and erudition! Jesus is the ignorant man’s Christ as much as the learned man’s Christ. For He has chosen “the base things of the world and the things that are despised.” Ah, much as I love true science and real education, I mourn and grieve that our ministers are so much diluting the Word of God with philosophy—desiring to be intellectual preachers, delivering model sermons. Their sermons are well fitted for a room full of college students and professors of theology, but of no use to the masses—being destitute of simplicity, warmth, earnestness, or even solid Gospel matter! I fear our college training is but a poor gain to our churches, since it often serves to wean the young man’s sympathies from the people and wed them to the few of the intellectual and wealthy of the church. It is good to be a fellow citizen in the republic of letters but better far to be an able minister of the Kingdom of Heaven! It is good to be able, like some great minds, to attract the mighty. But the more useful man will still be he, who, like Whitfield, uses “market language.” It is a sad fact that high places and the Gospel seldom well agree. And, moreover, be it known that the Doctrine of Christ is the Doctrine of the people. It was not meant to be the Gospel of a caste, a clique, or any one class of the community! The Covenant of Grace is not ordered for men of one peculiar grade, but some of all sorts are included. There were a few of the rich who followed Jesus in His own day and it is so now. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were well-to-do and there was the wife of Herod’s steward, with some more of the nobility. These, however, were but a few—His congregation was made up of the lower orders—the masses— the multitude. “The common people heard Him gladly.” And His Doctrine was one which did not allow for distinction, but put all men as sinners, naturally, on an equality in the sight of God!

One is your Father, “One is your Master, even Christ and all you are Brothers and Sisters.” These were words which He taught to His disciples, while in His own Person. He was the mirror of humility and proved Himself the Friend of earth’s poor sons and the lover of mankind. O you purse proud! O you who cannot touch the poor even with your white gloves! Ah, you with your miters and your staffs! Ah, you with your cathedrals and splendid ornaments! This is the Man whom you call Master—the people’s Christ—One of the people! And yet you look down with scorn upon the people—you despise them! What are they in your opinion? The common herd—the multitude. Out with you! Call yourselves no more the ministers of Christ! How can you be, unless, descending from your pomp and your dignity, you come among the poor and visit them? Unless you walk among our teeming population and preach to them the Gospel of Christ Jesus? We believe you to be the descendants of the fishermen? Ah, not until you remove your grandeur and, like the fishermen, come out—the people’s men and preach to the people—speak to the people, instead of lolling on your splendid seats and making yourselves rich at the expense of your pluralities! Christ’s ministers should be the friends of manhood at large, remembering that their Master was the people’s Christ. Rejoice! O rejoice! You multitudes, rejoice! rejoice! for Christ was One of the people!

II. Our second point was ELECTION. God says, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” Jesus Christ was elected—chosen. Somehow or other, that ugly Doctrine of Election will come out. Oh, there are some, the moment they hear that word, election, put their hands upon their foreheads and mutter, “I will wait till that sentence is over, there will be something I shall like better, perhaps.” Some others say, “I shall not go to that place again! The man is a hyper-Calvinist.” But the man is not a hyper-Calvinist—the man said what was in his Bible—that is all. He is a Christian and you have no right to call him by those ill-names, if indeed an ill-name it is, for we never blush at whatever men call us.

Here it is—“One chosen out of the people.” Now, what does that mean, but that Jesus Christ is chosen? Those who do not like to believe that the heirs of Heaven were elect cannot deny the Truth proclaimed in this verse—that Jesus Christ is the subject of election—that His Father chose Him and that He chose Him out of the people! As a Man He was chosen out of the people—to be the people’s Savior and the people’s Christ! And now let us gather up our thoughts and try to discover the transcendent wisdom of God’s choice. Election is no blind thing. God Sovereignly chooses but He always chooses wisely. There is always some secret reason for His choice of any particular individual—though that motive does not lie in ourselves, or in our own merits—yet there is always some secret cause far more remote than the doings of the creature. Some mighty reason unknown to all but Himself. In the case of Jesus the motives are apparent. And without pretending to enter the cabinet council of Jehovah, we may discover them.

1. First, we see that justice is thereby fully satisfied by the choice of One out of the people. Suppose God had chosen an angel to make satisfaction for our sins—imagine that an angel were capable of bearing that vast amount of suffering and agony which was necessary to our atonement! Yet after the angel had done it all, justice would never have been satisfied, for this one simple reason—that the Law declares, “The soul that sins IT shall die.” Now, man sins and therefore man must die! Justice required that as by man came death, by man also should come the resurrection and the life. The Law required, that as man was the sinner, man should be the victim—that as in Adam all died, even so in another Adam should all be made alive. Consequently it was necessary that Jesus Christ should be chosen out of the people. For had yon blazing angel near the Throne, that lofty Gabriel, laid aside his splendors, descended to our earth, endured pain, suffered agonies, entered the vault of death and groaned out a miserable existence in an extremity of woe—after all that— he would not have satisfied inflexible Justice, because it is said, a man must die and otherwise the sentence is not executed!

2. But there is another reason why Jesus Christ was chosen out of the people. It is because thereby the whole race receives honor. Do you know I would not be an angel if Gabriel would ask me? If he would beseech me to exchange places with him, I would not. I would lose so much by the exchange and he would gain so much. Poor, weak and worthless though I am, yet I am a man—and being a man there is a dignity about manhood—a dignity lost one day in the Garden of the Fall but regained in the garden of Resurrection! It is a fact that a man is greater than an angel— that in Heaven humanity stands nearer the Throne than angelic existence! You will read in the Book of Revelation that the 24 elders stood around the Throne and in the outer circle stood the angels. The elders, who are the representatives of the whole Church, were honored with a greater nearness to God than the ministering spirits. Why man—elect man—is the greatest being in the universe, except God! Man sits up there—look! At God’s right hand—radiant with glory—there sits a MAN! Ask me who governs Providence and directs its awfully mysterious machinery. I tell you it is a Man—the Man Christ Jesus! Ask me who has, during the past month, bound up the rivers in chains of ice and who now has loosed them from the shackles of winter. I tell you a Man did it— Christ! Ask me who shall come to judge the earth in righteousness and I say a Man. A real, veritable Man is to hold the scales of judgment and to call all nations around Him. And who is the channel of Grace? Who is the emporium of all the Father’s mercy? Who is the great gathering up of all the love of the Covenant? I reply a Man—the Man Christ Jesus! And Christ, being a Man, has exalted you and exalted me and put us into the highest ranks. He made us, originally, a little lower than the angels and now despite our fall in Adam, He has crowned us, His elect, with glory and honor! And He has set us at His right hand in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

3. But, my Brothers and Sisters, let us take a sweeter view than that.

Why was He chosen out of the people? Speak, my heart! What is the first reason that rushes up to yourself? For heart-thoughts are best thoughts. Thoughts from the head are often good for nothing but thoughts of the heart, deep musings of the soul, these are priceless as pearls of Ormuz! If it is a humbler poet, provided that his songs gush from his heart, they shall better strike the cords of my soul than the lifeless emanations of a mere brain. Here, Christian—what do you think is the sweet reason for the election of your Lord, He being one of the people? Was it not this— that He might be able to be my Brother, in the blest tie of kindred blood? Oh, what relationship there is between Christ and the Believer! The Believer can say—

*“One there is above all others  
Well deserves the name of Friend—  
His is love beyond a brother’s  
Faithful, free and knows no end.”*

I have a great Brother in Heaven. I have heard boys say sometimes in the street that they would tell their brother and I have often said so when the enemy has attacked me—“I will tell my Brother in Heaven.” I may be poor, but I have a Brother who is rich! I have a Brother who is a King! I am brother to the Prince of the Kings of the earth! And will He allow me to starve, or need, or lack, while He is on His Throne? Oh, no! He loves me. He has fraternal feelings towards me. He is my Brother. But more than that—think, O Believer! Christ is not merely your Brother, but He is your Husband! “Your Maker is your Husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name.” It rejoices the wife to lean her head on the broad breast of her husband, in full assurance that his arms will be strong to labor for her, or defend her. She knows that his heart always throbs with love to her and that all he has and is, belongs to her, as the sharer of his existence. Oh, to know by the influence of the Holy Spirit, that the sweet alliance is made between my soul and the ever precious Jesus! It is enough to quicken all my soul to music and make each atom of my frame a grateful songster to the praise of Christ. Come, let me remember when I lay like an infant in my blood, cast out in the open field. Let me recollect the notable moment when He said, “Live!” And let me never forget that He has educated me, trained me up and one day will espouse me to Himself in righteousness, crowning me with a nuptial crown in the palace of His Father! Oh, it is bliss unspeakable! I wonder not that the thought does stagger my words to utter it!—that Christ is One of the people, that He might be nearly related to you and to me, that He might be the kinsman, next of kin—

*“In ties of blood with sinners one,  
Our Jesus is to Glory gone!  
Has all His foes to ruin hurled —  
Sin, Satan, earth, death, Hell, the world.”*

Saint, wrap this blessed thought, like a necklace of diamonds, around the neck of your memory. Put it, as a golden ring, on the finger of recollection and use it as the King’s own seal, stamping the petitions of your faith with confidence of success!  
4. But now another idea suggests itself. Christ was chosen out of the

people—that He might know our needs and sympathize with us. You know the old tale—that one half the world does not know how the other half lives—and that is very true. I believe some of the rich have no notion whatever of what the distress of the poor is. They have no idea of what it is to labor for their daily food. They have a very faint conception of what a rise in the price of bread means. They do not know anything about it. And when we put men in power who never were of the people, they do not understand the art of governing us. But our great and glorious Jesus Christ is One chosen out of the people and, therefore, He knows our needs.

 Temptation and pain He suffered before us. Sickness He endured, for when hanging upon the Cross, the scorching of that broiling sun brought on a burning fever. Weariness—He has endured it, for weary He sat by the well. Poverty—He knows it, for sometimes He had not bread to eat, except that bread of which the world knows nothing. To be houseless—He knew it, for the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but He had not where to lay His head. My Brother and Sister Christian, there is no place where you can go where Christ has not been before you, sinful places alone excepted! In the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death you may see His bloody footsteps—footprints marked with gore. Yes, and even at the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, you shall, when you come hard by the side, say, “There are the footprints of a Man— whose are they?” Stooping down, you shall discern a nail-mark and shall say, “Those are the footsteps of the blessed Jesus.” He has been before you! He has smoothed the way. He has entered the grave, that He might make the tomb the royal bedchamber of the ransomed race—the closet where they lay aside the garments of labor, to put on the vestments of eternal rest. In all places, wherever we go, the Angel of the Covenant has been our forerunner. Each burden we have to carry has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel—

*“His way was much rougher and darker than mine.*

*Did Christ my Lord suffer—and shall I repine?”*I am speaking to those in great trial. Dear fellow traveler! Take courage— Christ has consecrated the road and made the narrow way the King’s own road to life!

One thought more and then I will pass on to my third point. There is a poor soul over there who is desirous of coming to Jesus, but he is in very great trouble, lest he should not came right. And I know many Christians who say, “Well, I hope I have come to Christ, but I am afraid I have not come right.” There is a little footnote to one of the hymns in dear Mr. Denham’s collection in which he says, “Some people are afraid they do not come right. Now, no man can come except the Father draws him. So I apprehend, if they come at all, they cannot come wrong!” So do I apprehend, if men come at all, they must come right. Here is a thought for you, poor coming Sinner. Why are you afraid to come? “Oh,” you say, “I am so great a sinner, Christ will not have mercy upon me.” Oh, you do not know my blessed Master! He is more loving than you think Him to be. I was once wicked enough to think the same, but I have found Him ten thousand times more kind than I thought. I tell you, He is so loving, so gracious, so kind, there never was one half so good as He. He is kinder than ever you can think. His love is greater than your fears and His merits are more prevalent than your sins! But still you say, “I am afraid I shall not come aright, I think I shall not use acceptable words.” I tell you why that is—because you do not remember that Christ was taken out of the people. If Her Majesty were to send for me tomorrow morning, I dare say I should feel very anxious about what kind of clothes I should wear and how I should walk in and how I should observe court etiquette and so on. But if one of my friends here were to send for me, I should go straight off and see him, because he is one of the people and I like him. Some of you say, “How can I go to Christ? What shall I say? What words shall I use?” If you were going to one above you, you might ask so—but He is One of the people. Go as you are, poor Sinner—just in your rags, just in your filth—in all your wickedness, just as you are! O consciencestricken Sinner, come to Jesus! He is One of the people. If the Spirit has given you a sense of sin, do not study how you are to come—come anyway! Come with a groan, come with a sigh, come with a tear. Any way you come, if you do but come, will do, for He is One of the people. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Let him that hears say, Come.”

Here I cannot resist airing an illustration. I have heard that in the deserts, when the caravans are in need of water and they are afraid they shall not find any, they are accustomed to send on a camel, with its rider, some distance in advance. Then after a little space follows another. And then at a short interval, another—as soon as the first man finds water, almost before he stoops down to drink, he shouts aloud, “Come!” The next one, hearing the voice, repeats the word, “Come!” while the nearest again takes up the cry, “Come!” until the whole wilderness echoes with the word “Come!” So in that verse, “the Spirit and the Bride say, first of all, Come—then let him that hears say, Come and whoever is thirsty, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.” With this picture I leave our survey of the reasons for the election of Christ Jesus.

III. And now I am to close up with His EXALTATION. “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” You will recollect while I am speaking upon this exaltation that it is really the exaltation of all the elect in the Person of Christ. For all that Christ is and all that Christ has, is mine. If I am a Believer, whatever He is in His exalted Person, that I am, for I am made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places!

1. First, dear Friends, it was exaltation enough for the body of Christ to be exalted into union with the Divinity. That was honor which none of us can ever receive. We never hope to have this body united with a God. It cannot be. Once has Incarnation been done—never but once. Of no other man can it be said, “He was One with the Father and the Father was One with Him.” Of no other man shall it be said that the Deity tabernacled in Him and that God was manifest in His flesh, seen of angels, justified of the spirit and carried up to Heaven!

2. Again—Christ was exalted by His Resurrection. Oh, I should have liked to have stolen into that tomb of our Savior. I suppose it was a large chamber—within it lay a massive marble sarcophagus and very likely a ponderous lid was laid upon it. Then outside the door there lay a mighty stone and guards kept watch before it. Three days did that Sleeper slumber there! Oh, I could have wished to lift the lid of that sarcophagus and look upon Him. Pale He lay. Blood-streaks there were upon Him, not all quite washed away by those careful women who had buried Him. Death, exulting, cries, “I have slain Him—the Seed of the woman who is to destroy me is now my captive!” Ah, how grim Death laughed! Ah, how he stared through his bony eyelids as he said, “I have the boasted Victor in my grasp.” “Ah,” said Christ, “but I have you!” And up He sprang, the lid of the sarcophagus started up. And He, who has the keys of death and Hell, seized Death, ground his iron limbs to powder, dashed him to the ground and said, “O Death, I will be your plague. O Hell, I will be your destruction.” Out He came and in turn the watchmen fled away. Startling with Glory, radiant with light, effulgent with Divinity, He stood before them. Christ was then exalted in His Resurrection!

3. But how exalted was He in His Ascension! He went out from the city to the top of the hill, His disciples attending Him while He waited the appointed moment. Mark His Ascension! Bidding farewell to the whole circle, up He went gradually ascending like the exaltation of a mist from the lake or the cloud from the steaming river. Aloft He soared—by His own mighty buoyancy and elasticity He ascended up on high—not like Elijah, carried up by fiery horses. Nor like Enoch of old, it could not be said He was not, for God took Him. He went Himself. And as He went, I think I see the angels looking down from Heaven’s battlements and crying, “See the conquering Hero comes!” While at His nearer approach, again they shouted, “See the conquering Hero comes!” So His journey through the plains of ether is complete—He nears the gates of Heaven—attending angels shout, “Lift up your heads, you everlasting gates. And be you lift up, you everlasting doors!” The glorious hosts within scarcely ask the question, “Who is the King of Glory?” When from ten thousand, thousand tongues there rolls an ocean of harmony, beating in mighty waves of music on the pearly gates and opening them at once, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle!”

Lo! Heaven’s barriers are thrown wide open and cherubim are hastening to meet their Monarch—  
*“They brought His chariot from afar,  
To bear Him to His Throne;  
Clapped their triumphant wings and said, ‘The Savior’s work is done.’ ”*

Behold He marches through the streets! See how kingdoms and powers fall down before Him! Crowns are laid at His feet and His Father says, ‘Well done, My Son, well done!’ while Heaven echoes with the shout, “Well done! Well done!” Up He climbs to that high Throne, side by side with the Paternal Deity. “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.”

4. The last exaltation of Christ which I shall mention is that which is to come—when He shall sit upon the Throne of His Father David and shall judge all nations. You will observe I have omitted that exaltation which Christ is to have as the king of this world during the millennium. I do not profess to understand it and therefore I leave that alone. But I believe Jesus Christ is to come upon the Throne of Judgment, “and before Him shall be gathered all nations. And He shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” Sinner! You believethat there is a judgment. You know that the tares and wheat cannot always grow together—that the sheep and the goats shall not always feed in one pasture. But do you know of that Man who is to judge you? Do you know that He who is to judge you is a Man? I say a MAN—a Man once despised and rejected—

*“The Lord shall come, but not the same  
As once in lowliness He came—  
A humble Man before His foes;  
A weary Man and full of woes.”*

Ah, no! Rainbows shall be about His head. He shall hold the sun in His right hand as the token of His government. He shall put the moon and stars beneath His feet, as the dust of the pedestal of His Throne, which shall be of solid clouds of light. The books shall be opened—those massive books, which contain the deeds of both the quick and the dead. Ah, how shall the despised Nazarene sit triumphant over all His foes! No more the taunt, the jeer, the scoff. But one hideous cry of misery, “Hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne!” Oh you, my Hearers, who now look with contempt on Jesus and His Cross, I tremble for you. Oh, fiercer than a lion on his prey, is love when once incensed. Oh Despisers! I warn you of that day when the placid brow of the Man of Sorrows shall be knit with frowns. When the eyes which once were moistened by dew-drops of pity, shall flash lightning on their enemies! And the hands, which once were nailed to the Cross for our redemption, shall grasp the thunderbolt for your damnation! While the mouth which once said, “Come unto Me, you weary,” shall pronounce in words louder and more terrible than the voice of the thunder, “Depart you cursed!” Sinners! You may think it a trifle to sin against the Man of Nazareth, but you shall find that in so doing you have offended the Man who shall judge the earth in righteousness. And for your rebellion you shall endure waves of torment in the eternal ocean of wrath. From that doom may God deliver you! But I warn you of it.

You have all read the story of the lady, who, on her wedding day stepped up stairs and seeing an old chest, in her fun and frolic stepped inside, thinking to hide herself an hour, that her friends might hunt for her. But a spring lock lay in ambush there and fastened her down forever. Nor did they ever find her until years had passed. When moving that old lumbering chest they found the bones of a skeleton, with here and there a jeweled ring and some fair thing. She had sprung in there in pleasantry and mirth but was locked down forever. Young Brothers and Sisters! Take heed that you are not locked down forever by your sins! One jovial glass—it is all. “One moment’s step,” so said she. But there’s a secret lock lays in ambush. One turn into that house of ill-fame—one wandering from the paths of rectitude—that is all. Oh, Sinner! It is all. But do you know what that all is? To be fastened down forever? Oh, if you would shun this, listen to me, while—for I have but one moment more—I tell you yet again of the Man who was “chosen out of the people.”

You proud ones! I have a word for you. You delicate ones, whose footsteps must not touch the ground! You who look down in scorn upon your fellow mortals—proud worms despising your fellow worms, because you are somewhat more showily dressed! What do you think of this? The Man of the people is to save you, if you are saved at all. The Christ of the crowd—the Christ of the mass—the Christ of the people—He is to be your Savior! You must stoop, proud man! You must bow, proud lady! You must lay aside your pomp, or else you will never be saved. For the Savior of the people must be your Savior!

But to the poor trembling sinner, whose pride is gone, I repeat the comforting assurance. Would you shun sin? Would you avoid the curse? My Master tells me to say this morning—“Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.” I remember the saying of a good old saint. Someone was talking about the mercy and love of Jesus and concluded by saying, “Ah, is it not astonishing?” She said, “No, not at all.” But they said it was. “Why,” she said, “it is just like He—it is just like He!” You say, can you believe such a thing of a Person? “Oh yes!” It may be said, “that is just His Nature.” So you, perhaps, cannot believe that Christ would save you, guilty creature as you are? I tell you it is just like He! He saved Saul—He saved me—He may save you! Yes, what is more, He will save you—for whosoever comes unto Him, He will in no wise cast out!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3242 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNPARALLELED LOVING KINDNESSES  
NO. 3242

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 17, 1863.

**“Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses, which You swore unto David in Your truth?”  
Psalm 89:49.**

THE LORD had made an Everlasting Covenant with David, ordered in all things and sure, yet that Covenant was not intended to preserve him from trouble. When this Psalm was written, he had been brought very low. His crown had been cast down to the ground, his enemies had rejoiced over him and he had become a reproach to his neighbors. Then his thoughts flew back to the happier days of the past and the Covenant which the Lord had made with him—and either David, himself, or Ethan, writing on his behalf, enquired, in the words of our text, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses, which You swore unto David in Your truth?”

I. Applying this passage to the people of God, I remark, first, that WE HAVE RECEIVED MANY MERCIES IN THE PAST.  
Is that too common a matter for you to think and talk about? If you know it so well, why do you forget it so often? The mercies of God wake us every morning so that we are as used to them as we are to the sunlight, yet some of us think but little of them. They follow us till the night and we get as accustomed to them as we do to our beds, yet perhaps some of us think less of them than we do of our beds! We have Providential mercies every moment of the day and every day of our lives—we can never count the number of them, for they are more than the sands upon the seashore! I am going, however, to speak of the spiritual mercies with which God has enriched us—the blessings of the upper springs—and it will help you to recall them if I take the list of them that is given at the beginning of the 103rd Psalm.  
Turn to it and read, first, “who forgives all your iniquities.” All of us to whom these words belong should constantly remember that we are pardoned souls. We were not so once—oh, what would we not have given, then, to know what we know now? At that time, our iniquities pressed upon us as a burden that we could not bear! The stings of conscience gave us no rest and the terrors of Hell got hold of us! When I was under conviction of sin, I felt that I would willingly have given my eyes, my hands, my all, if I might but be able to say, “I am a forgiven soul.” So, now that we are pardoned, let us not forget the Lord’s loving kindness in forgiving all our iniquities. If you, my Hearer, can forget it, I may well question whether your iniquities have ever been forgiven, for the pardon of sin is so great a mercy that the song which it evokes from the heart must last forever!  
The next mercy in the Psalmist’s list is, “who heals all your diseases.” Think again, my Brother or my Sister, what the Lord has done for you in this respect. Once, pride possessed you like a burning fever and long prevented you from submitting to God’s simple plan of salvation—but you have been cured of that terrible malady and now you are sitting humbly at the feet of Jesus rejoicing in being saved by Divine Grace! Perhaps you were once like the demoniac of old. The chains of morality could not bind you and the fetters of human law could not restrain you. You cut and wounded yourself and you were a terror unto others. But, now, thanks be unto God, you are so completely healed that there is not even a scar left to show where you were wounded! Will you not praise the Lord for this unspeakable mercy? What would you not have given for it, once, when your many diseases held you in their cruel grip? Then cease not to praise Jehovah-Rophi, “the Lord that heals you!”  
The next mercy also demands a song of grateful praise—“who redeems your life from destruction.” You have been saved from going down into the Pit—the ransom price has been paid for you and you have been redeemed—not with silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Remember there is no wrath against you, now, in the heart of God, for His righteous anger on account of your sin was all poured out upon the head of His dear Son, your Surety and Substitute! The devil has no claim upon you, now, for you have been redeemed by Christ unto the last farthing. Then can you forget to praise Him who has done such great things for you? What would you not have given, at one time, to have had half a hope that you were a redeemed soul when your poor knees were sore through your long praying, and your voice was hoarse with crying unto God? You would gladly have bartered the light of day, the comforts of life and the joys of friendship for the assurance of your redemption! Well, then, since you have now obtained that priceless gift, forget not to praise the Lord for all His loving kindness towards you!  
For the next clause in the Psalm is this, “who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.” Think, Brother or Sister in Christ, what the Lord has done for you. Not content with saving you from Hell, He has adopted you into His own family, made you a son or a daughter of the King of kings and set a royal crown upon your head—a crown of “loving kindness and tender mercies.” You are made an heir of God and a jointheir with Jesus Christ! Is not this unparalleled loving kindness? Is not this, indeed, the tender mercy of our God towards you? Then can you ever forget such loving kindness and tender mercy? There have been times, in the past history of some of us, when that ancient prophecy has been most graciously fulfilled in our experience, “You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” So, as we remember the former loving kindnesses of the Lord, we rejoice that He still crowns us with loving kindnesses and tender mercies!  
We must not forget the next verse—“who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” If we are in Christ Jesus, we have all that we need—we are perfectly satisfied. We do not need a better Savior, we do not need a better hope, we do not need a better Bible, we do not need better promises. We do need more faith, but we do not need a better ground of faith! We do desire to have more love to our Lord, but we do not desire a better Object for our love! We desire to always dive deeper and deeper, but only in the fathomless sea of Jesus’ love! Others are roaming here and there, vainly seeking satisfaction, but our mouth is so filled with good things that we are satisfied. We asked and the Lord gave to us. We prayed for pardon and the Lord fully forgave us for Jesus’ sake. We have received so much mercy from Him that our soul is satisfied and soars aloft as on an eagle’s wings, leaving all terrestrial cares, sorrows and doubts far below us amid the earth-born clouds above which we have mounted by God’s Grace!  
II. Now, having thus briefly recalled the Lord’s former loving kindnesses, I have to remind you, in the second place, that WE ARE NOT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE SAME FLOW OF MERCY TOWARD US.  
The Psalmist asks, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses?” Well, where are they? Why, they are where they used to be, though we do not always realize them! The Lord’s mercies have not changed, but our perception of them is not always as vivid as it ought to be. Let us again consider the mercies of which I have already spoken to you.

“Who forgives all your iniquities.” There are times when a Christian fears whether his sins are really forgiven. He is saved, yet he has a doubt whether he is saved or not. All his past sins seem to rise up before him and the foul suggestion of unbelief is, “Can it be possible that all those sins have been put away? Have all those mountains of iniquity been cast into the Red Sea of the Savior’s atoning blood?” Many young Believers who judge themselves too much by their feelings, are apt to imaging that they have been deceived and that they are still under condemnation. If I have any Brothers or Sisters like that here, let me assure them that there are times when the very best of the saints have to cry out in the bitterness of their soul, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses?” The Believer in Christ is always justified as far as the Law of God is concerned, but he does not always hear the proclamation of pardon in the court of conscience! God’s sun is always shining, but there are clouds that obscure its beams, yet it is only hidden for a while. So is it with the loving kindness of the Lord with regard to the forgiveness of sin—whether we always realize it or not, the forgiveness that has once been bestowed upon us will never be withdrawn from us, world without end!  
It is the same with the next mercy—“who heals all your diseases.” It may be that there are some of us here who know that the Great Physician has healed our soul maladies, yet at times unbelief and other evil diseases cause us pain and agony of spirit. It is with us as it was in the days of Noah when the fountains of the great deep were broken up—and happy are we if we can now float in the ark of our faith above the awful sea of our depravity which threatens to drown every spiritual comfort and cover every hope! If I were to look within my own heart for comfort and hope, I would often be in despair—but when I look away to my Lord, alone, then I realize what He has done and is still doing for me, for He still “heals” all my diseases! Marvel not, dear Friends, if you cannot see yourselves growing in Grace as you would like to do. When a farmer goes to look at his root crops, he is not so much concerned as to the appearance of the part that is above ground—he needs to know how that part is flourishing that is out of sight. So, very often a Christian is growing underground, as it were—growing in Divine Grace, knowledge, love and humility—though he may not have as many virtues and graces that are visible to other people, or even to himself. Sanctification is being worked in the saints according to the will of God, but it is a secret work—yet, in due time the fruit of it will be manifest, even as the farmer at the proper season digs up his roots and rejoices that his labor has not been expended upon them in vain.  
Notice, too, that next mercy—“who redeems your life from destruction.” Now mark this—those who are once redeemed are always redeemed! The price of their redemption was paid upon Calvary and that great transaction can never be reversed. I dare to put it very strongly and to say that they were as fully redeemed when they were dead in trespasses and sins as they will be when they stand in the full blaze of Jehovah’s Presence before the eternal Throne of God! They were not, then, conscious of their redemption, but their unconsciousness did not alter the fact of their redemption! So is it with the Believer—there are dark days and cloudy days in his experience, but he is just as truly saved in the dark and cloudy day as when the sun is shining brightly and the clouds have all been blown away! In the old days of slavery, when a slave’s freedom had been purchased, there may have been times when he had not much to eat, or when he had many aches and pains, but such things did not affect the fact that he was a free man. Suppose someone had said to him, “My poor fellow, you have nothing in the cupboard, you are very sick and ill, you are still a slave”? He would have replied, “That is not good reasoning. I know that I was redeemed, for I saw the price paid for my ransom. I have my free papers and I shall never again be a slave!” So is it with Believers—the Son of God has made them free by giving Himself as a ransom for them, so they shall be “free indeed.” Their redemption does not depend upon their realization of it, but upon their Redeemer who has made it effective for them!  
The same principle applies to the next mercy—“who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.” There may be some Christians here who need to learn a lesson that one good Methodist tried to teach another whom he met at a class meeting. It grieved him as he heard over and over again the story of his Brother’s trials and troubles, but nothing about the multitudes of mercies with which he was continually being crowned. So one day he said to him, “My Brother, I wish you would change your residence—you do not live in the right part of the town.” “How is that?” enquired the other. “Why, you live where I used to live, down in Murmuring Street. It is very dark and narrow, the chimneys always smoke, the lamps never burn brightly and all sorts of diseases abound in that unhealthy quarter. I got tired of living in Murmuring Street, so I took a new house in Content Street. It is a fine, wide, open street where the breezes of Heaven can freely blow, so the people who dwell there are healthy and happy. And though all the houses in the street are of different sizes, it is a very remarkable thing that they are, all of them, just the right size for the people who live in them! The Apostle Paul used to live in that street, for he said, ‘I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” so I would advise you, my Brother, to move into Content Street as soon as you can.” That was very good advice—and we may pass it on to any murmurers or grumblers whom we know. Think, Beloved, how the Lord is still crowning you with loving kindness and tender mercies! I know you are not strong, but then you have not that acute pain you used to have. I know that you are growing old, but that only means that you are getting so much nearer Heaven! I know your friends are fewer than they used to be, but then those who are left are true friends. So you see that you are still crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies!  
So is it with the last mercy in the list—“who satisfies your mouth with good things.” I will venture to say that the Christian has not one real need that is not satisfied with the good things that God has provided for him. If he has any other need, or thinks he has, it is better for him not to have that need supplied. If we need the pleasures of sin, it is a great mercy that God will not give them to us, for the supply of such a need would be our soul’s damnation! If we could gather any comfort through following that which is evil, it is of the Lord’s mercy that such comfort is not our portion—  
*“This world is ours and worlds to come!  
Earth is our lodge and Heaven our home,”* so what can we need besides?  
III. Now, thirdly, WHY ARE WE NOT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE SAME FLOW OF MERCY TOWARD US?  
Sometimes we miss our former comforts as the result of sin. Sin indulged is a certain barrier to happiness. No one can enjoy communion with Christ while turning aside to crooked ways. To the extent to which a Believer is inconsistent with his profession, to that extent will he be unhappy—and it will be no cause for surprise if he has to cry, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses?” We must always distinguish between the punishment of sin which Christ endured on His people’s behalf and the fatherly chastisement with which God visits upon them for their wrong-doing. Though He will not condemn them as a Judge, He will chastise them as a Father. And they cannot expect to enjoy the loving kindnesses of the Lord while they are enduring the strokes of His rod because of their transgressions!  
We may also lose a comfortable sense of God’s mercy through neglecting to use the means of Grace. Leave off the regular reading of your Bible and then you will be like the man who misses his meals and so grows weak and languid. Neglect private prayer and then see whether you will not have to cry with Job, “Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me when His candle shined upon my head and when, by His light, I walked through darkness.” Stay away from the Prayer Meetings and then if your soul is not sad, it ought to be! If a man will not come where there is a fire, is it surprising that he cries that he cannot get warm? The neglect of the means of Grace causes many to enquire, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses?”  
The same result follows when any idol is set up in our heart. While we worship the Lord, alone, the temple of our heart will be filled with His Glory. But if we set up an idol upon His Throne, we shall soon hear the rushing of wings and the Divine Voice saying, “Let Us go from here.” God and mammon cannot abide in the same house! Remember that you serve a jealous God and be very careful not to provoke Him to jealousy. Every idol must be cast down, or His comfortable Presence cannot be enjoyed.  
Coldness of heart towards God is another cause of the loss of enjoyment of His favor. When the heart grows spiritually cold, the whole being soon gets out of order. If the heart is warm and vigorous, the pulsations throughout the entire frame will be kept strong and healthy, but when the heart is cold, the blood will be chilled in the veins and all the powers will be numbed and paralyzed. So, Beloved, see to it that in the power of the Holy Spirit you maintain the love of your espousals—that pristine warmth of holy affection which you delighted to manifest when first you knew the Lord—or else you will soon have to cry, “Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses?” Live near to God and this shall not often be your cry! But if you backslide from Him, this shall soon be your sorrowful enquiry. If you have to mourn an absent God, seek to know the reason why He has withdrawn Himself from you—and repent of the sin that has separated you from Him.

IV. Now, Lastly, LET US REMEMBER THAT THE DIVINE COVENANT REMAINS FIRM AND STEADFAST UNDER ALL CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. The Covenant made with David was established by the oath of God. And Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says that “God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two Immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”  
For our consolation, let us remember, first, that the parties to the Covenant are always the same. God has not one set of chosen ones today and another set tomorrow. In the Lamb’s Book of Life there are not erasures of certain names and the insertion of others in their place. No, Beloved, that is not the way in which the Lord deals with His elect—He does not play fast and loose with them like that. He does not love them one day, and hate them the next. Oh, no!—  
*“Whom once He loves, He never leaves,  
But loves them to the end.”*  
And, next, the Seal of the Covenant is always the same. It is sealed with the precious blood of Jesus! His one great Sacrifice on Calvary made the Covenant forever sure—  
*“‘Tis signed, and sealed, and ratified,  
In all things ordered well.”*  
We do not seal the Covenant—Christ has done that—it is His blood that makes the Covenant sure to all for whom He stood as Surety and Substitute. This is our consolation even when we have no present enjoyment of the blessings that are secured to us by the Covenant. Even the sealing of the Spirit is not the Seal of the Covenant, though it is to us the certain evidence of our interest in the Covenant—it is like a seal on our copy of the Covenant, the great deed itself, sealed with the blood of Jesus, is safely preserved in the archives of Heaven where none can mutilate or steal or destroy it!  
Further, the efficacy of the Covenant is always the same. It is not like human covenants which may or may not be fulfilled, or which may become void through lapse of time. This Covenant is eternal, covering past, present and future—and it shall be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle, for He who swore unto David will certainly perform all that He has promised to His own chosen people—  
*“The Voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises.”*  
When God said, “Let there be light,” there was light. And when that same God says, “Let there be light in that dark soul,” the light at once enters the heart and it is Divinely illuminated! Thus it has come to pass that we who were sometimes darkness, now are light in the Lord. And to us comes the Apostolic injunction, “Walk as children of light.” The efficacy of the Covenant does not depend upon us—if it did, it would be a poor, feeble, fickle thing that would fail us just when we needed it most! There would be no hope of our ever getting to Heaven if we had to depend upon our own efforts, or our own merits, or anything of our own—our comfort arises from the fact that the Covenant is made on our behalf by our great Representative and Redeemer, who will, Himself, see that all that is guaranteed to us in the Covenant is fulfilled in due season! There rolls the glorious chariot of salvation in which all Believers are riding to Heaven! Death and Hell cannot stop it! All the fears of any who are in it will not affect their eternal safety and not one of them shall be found to be missing in the day when the roll of the redeemed is called in Glory! Be of good courage, Believer, for you are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation! Even though you have, for a while, to mourn the loss of the Lord’s former loving kindnesses, search your heart to see how far that loss has been caused by your own sin. And then return to the Lord with all your heart and He will renew to you His former favors and give to you new mercies of which you have not as yet even dreamed!  
As for those here who have no former loving kindnesses of the Lord to which they can look back, I pray that this may be the beginning of better days for them. May they think of the mercies which the Lord has bestowed upon others and may they cry unto Him, “Lord, do to us as You have done to them! Adopt us into Your family as Your sons and Your daughters, and let us share in all the blessings that You give to Your children!” Remember, dear Friends, that it is by simple and sincere faith in the crucified Christ of Calvary that sinners are eternally saved! It is by His blood that we who once were afar off, are now made near! Whoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed or confounded! Therefore, my Hearer, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and God shall be glorified. So may it be, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 89.**

Verses 1, 2. I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever: with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Your faithfulness shall You establish

in the very heavens. [See Sermon #1565, Volume 26—MASCHIL OF ETHAN, A MAJESTIC SONG—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Here

is an eternal song concerning eternal mercy! The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, so the saints’ praise for the never-ending mercy must itself be without end. The Psalmist has made known God’s faithfulness to all generations, not only by speaking of it, but especially by writing of it, for that which is written abides when that which is merely spoken is soon forgotten. God’s faithfulness concerns Heaven as well as earth and He will establish it “in the very heavens.”

3, 4. I have made a Covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David, My servant, Your seed will I establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations. Selah. The complete fulfillment of this glorious Covenant promise concerns not only David and his seed, but “great David’s greater Son” and His spiritual seed—the chosen people with whom the Lord has made “an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

5-7. And the heavens shall praise Your wonders O LORD: Your faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heavens can be compared unto the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. A holy reverence is becoming in all who draw near to the thrice-holy Jehovah, whether in the upper sanctuary or in the congregation of the saints on earth! In His gracious condescension, He allows His people wondrous familiarity in their approaches to Him, yet this must never make them forget the Infinite distance that separates the Creator from even the highest and holiest of His creatures!

8-10. O LORD God of Hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto You or to Your faithfulness round about You? You rule the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, You still them. You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; You have scattered Your enemies with Your strong arm. The ruling of the raging of the sea, the stilling of the stormy waves and the breaking and scattering of the might of Egypt are used by the Psalmist to illustrate the Omnipotence of Jehovah, before which the mightiest monarch on earth had no more power than if it had been a corpse!

11, 12. The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours: as for the world and the fullness thereof, You have founded them. The north and the south You have created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name. The Psalmist rejoices in the Lord as the Creator and Possessor of the heavens above and the earth beneath. “All things were created by Him, and for Him.”

13. You have a mighty arm: strong is Your hand, and high is Your right  
hand. [See Sermons #674, Volume 12—THE MIGHTY ARM and #1314, Volume 22 which has the same title—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Amid

all the varying expressions that the Psalmist uses, he continues to admire and magnify God’s majestic might. Whether for the defense of His people or the overthrow of His enemies, His arm is mighty, yes, more than that, for it is Almighty! No human language can adequately describe that glorious hand which has only to be opened to satisfy the desire of every living thing!

14. Justice and judgment are the habitation of Your Throne: mercy and truth shall go before Your face. What blessed heralds does the Lord employ! “Mercy and truth shall go before Your face.” It is these gracious attributes, especially as they are displayed in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that enable us even to welcome those sterner attributes—“justice and judgment,” which are the habitation of God’s Throne.

15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. There are many that hear it, but perhaps not one out of a thousand of them that really know it. The hearing of the joyful sound is not sufficient to make people blessed, though faith comes by hearing—it is the understanding of what is meant by the glad tidings—it is the reception of the Gospel message which brings immediate and eternal blessedness!

15. They shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Your Countenance. The practical effect of a saving knowledge of the Gospel is a holy walk, a walk of communion with God! Dear Friends, do you walk in that way? Do you know the joyful sound? Can you discern the difference between the true and the false Gospel? Can you distinguish the contrast between the harmonies of the one and the discords of the other? Do you know the inner secret of the heavenly music? Has it ever vibrated in your own souls? Happy are you if this is the case with you! The Psalmist goes on to show how such people are blessed.

16. In Your name shall they rejoice all the day. They shall not have mere passing fits of joy, but they shall be glad from morning to night!  
16. And in Your righteousness shall they be exalted. They shall mount to a higher platform of joy than that on which the men of the world are standing! They shall be lifted up in soul and spirit by the righteousness of God, especially as they see how that great attribute guarantees their eternal salvation!

17-19. For You are the Glory of their strength: and in Your favor our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. Then You spoke in vision to Your holy one, and said, I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of

the people. [See Sermon #11, Volume 1—THE PEOPLE’S CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is the very marrow of the

Gospel! This is, indeed, “the joyful sound” which makes us truly blessed—the fact that God did, of old, exalt “One chosen out of the people,” with whom He entered into an Eternal Covenant, pledging Himself to bless us through Him.

20. I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him. David was the means of bringing great blessings to the people over whom he ruled. God blessed the whole nation through him and the Covenant made with David was virtually a Covenant made with all the people of Israel. In like manner, the Covenant made with “great David’s greater Son” is virtually made with all those for whom He stood as Surety and Representative. The essence of the Gospel lies in the Covenant which God has made with His Son, Jesus Christ, on behalf of all His chosen people. Notice that God found David and anointed him as king, even as He has taken the Lord Jesus, and anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

21. With whom My hand shall be established: My arm also shall strengthen him. The Omnipotence of God is manifested in Christ, for He is “the power of God” as well as “the wisdom of God.”

22. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. “The son of wickedness” did afflict David for a while, but afterwards he came to the throne and ruled gloriously over God’s ancient people. So is it with our Covenant Lord and King. The wicked cannot now exact upon Him, nor afflict Him—He sits upon the Throne of God in Glory far beyond their reach!

23. And I will beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him. Who can ever stand up in opposition to Christ? He is that stone of which He, Himself, said, “Whoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

24. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with Him: and in My name shall His horn be exalted. God is always with His Son, Jesus Christ, in the plenitude of His faithfulness and mercy, to make Him a continual blessing to His people.

25. I will set His hand also in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers. Our King is a great King and He rules over sea and land—there is no limit to His dominions—and there will be no end to His righteous rule.

26. He shall cry unto Me, You are My Father, My God, and the rock of My salvation. All God’s children are a praying family and His onlybegotten and well-beloved Son sets a noble example in this respect as well as in everything else! He is still the great Intercessor before the Throne of His Father.

27. Also I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. Christ is, indeed, “higher than the kings of the earth,” for He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Do not your hearts rejoice as you think of this blessed King with whom God has entered into a Covenant to bless all who are trusting in Him, even the very poorest and feeblest of them? What a joy it is to us to see Jesus striking hands with the Eternal and entering into an Everlasting Covenant on our behalf!

28, 29. My mercy will I keep for Him forevermore, and My Covenant shall stand fast with Him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and His Throne as the days of Heaven. There can never be an end to the Throne of Christ, for His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and there can never be an end to the family of Christ, for His seed shall endure forever!

30-32 . If His children forsake My Law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then— “Then”—what? “I will destroy them, and sweep them away forever”? Oh, no! “Then”—

32. Will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. There is no sword in God’s hand to be used against His own children, but He does hold a rod—and that rod makes us smart and causes the blueness of the wound which cleanses away evil. We are grieved when we feel its strokes, yet there is Covenant Mercy in them. The rod of the Covenant is one of the best things that ever comes to us, since it whips our folly out of us! God grant us Grace to kiss the rod whenever we transgress against Him and He visits our iniquity with stripes!

33. Nevertheless My loving kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. Notice the use of the word, “Him,” here, as if it was intended to teach us that God’s love to His dear Son, and to His people in Him, is so great that though He may chasten us for our transgressions, He will never cast us away.

34-37 . My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in Heaven. Selah. In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the dynasty of David shall endure forever, and the spiritual seed of Christ shall also never come to an end. By the most binding Covenant and the most solemn pledge, and the most sacred oath, Jehovah has guaranteed the everlasting Kingdom of His Son and the eternal endurance of “His seed.”

38-45 . But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been angry with Your anointed. You have made void the Covenant of Your servant: You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. You have broken down all his hedges; You have brought his strongholds to ruin. All that pass by the way plunder him: he is a reproach to his neighbors. You have set up the right hand of his adversaries; You have made all his enemies to rejoice. You have also turned the edge of his sword, and have not made him to stand in the battle. You have made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth have You shortened: You have covered him with shame. Selah. Spiritually, this sad description reveals the sorrowful state of the professing Church of Christ in the times in which we live.

46. How long, LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Shall Your wrath burn like fire? That was the wisest thing for the Psalmist to do, and it is our best course, also. In the darkest days of the most sinful age, we can always resort to prayer. Let us do so.

47, 48. Remember how short my time is: Therefore have You made all men in vain? What man is he that lives, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah. The brevity of life makes it all the more important that we should waste none of it—and that we should appeal to the Lord to interpose speedily on the behalf of His Truth and those who love it.

49-52 . Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses, which You swore unto David in Your truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith Your enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed. Blessed be the LORD forevermore. Amen and Amen. The Psalm ends upon its keynote of praise unto Jehovah. There had been much to sadden the writer, as there is much to sadden us in these days. But we can unite with him in saying, “Blessed be the Lord forevermore. Amen and Amen.”

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THE GLORIOUS HABITATION  
NO. 46

**SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 14, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK..

**“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Psalm 90:1.**

Moses was the Inspired author of three devotional compositions. We first of all find him as Moses the poet, singing the song which is aptly joined with that of Jesus in the Book of Revelation, where it says, “The song of Moses and of the Lamb.” He was a poet on the occasion when Pharaoh and his hosts were cast into the Red Sea, “His chosen captains also were drowned in the Red Sea.” Further on in his life we discover him in the character of a preacher and then his Doctrine distilled as the dew and his speech dropped like the rain in those chapters which are full of glorious imagery and rich with poetry which you will find in the Book of Deuteronomy. And now in the Psalms we find him the author of a prayer—“A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” Happy combination of the poet, the preacher and the man of prayer! Where three such things are found together, the man becomes a very giant above his fellows! It often happens that the man who preaches has but little poetry and the man who is the poet, would not be able to preach and utter his poems before immense assemblies but would be only fit to write them by himself. It is a rare combination when true devotion and the spirit of poetry and eloquence meet in the same man. You will see in this Psalm a wondrous depth of spirituality. You will mark how the poet subsides into the man of God and how, lost in himself, he sings his own frailty, declares the Glory of God and asks that he may have the blessing of his heavenly Father always resting on his head.

This first verse will derive peculiar interest if you remember the place where Moses was when he thus prayed. He was in the wilderness. Not in some of the halls of Pharaoh, nor yet in a habitation in the land of Goshen, but in a wilderness. And perhaps from the summit of the hill, looking upon the tribes of Israel as they were taking up their tents and marching along, he thought, “Ah, poor travelers, they seldom rest anywhere. They have not any settled habitation where they can dwell. Here they have no continuing city.” But he lifted his eyes above and he said, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Passing his eyes back through history, he saw one great temple where God’s people had dwelt. And with his prophetical eyes rolling with sacred frenzy, he could foresee that throughout the future, the specially chosen of God would be able to sing, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”

Taking this verse as the subject of our discourse this morning, we shall, first of all, explain it. And then we shall try and do what the old Puritans called, “improve” it—by which they did not mean improve the text, but improve the people a little by the consideration of the verse!

I. First we will try to explain it somewhat. Here is a habitation—“Lord, You have been our dwelling place,” and secondly, if I may use such a common word, here is the lease of it—“You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”

First then, here is a habitation—“Lord, You have been our habitation.” The mighty Jehovah, who fills all immensity—the Eternal, Everlasting, Great I Am—does not refuse to allow figures concerning Himself. Though He is so high that the eyes of angels have not seen Him. Though He is so lofty that the wings of cherub have not reached Him. Though He is so great that the utmost extent of the travels of immortal spirits have never discovered the limit of Himself—yet He does not object that His people should speak of Him thus familiarly—and should say, “Jehovah You have been our dwelling place.” We shall understand this figure, better, by contrasting the thought with the state of Israel in the wilderness. Secondly by making mention of some things by way of comparison which are peculiar to our house and which we never can enjoy if we are not the possessors of a dwelling place of our own.

First, we shall contrast this thought, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place,” with the peculiar position of the Israelites as they were traveling through the wilderness.

We remark, first, that they must have been in a state of great uneasiness. At nightfall, or when the pillar stayed its motion, the tents were pitched and they laid themselves down to rest. Perhaps on the morrow, before the morning sun had risen, the trumpet sounded. They stirred themselves from their beds and found the ark was in motion. The fiery, cloudy pillar was leading the way through the narrow passages of the mountain up the hillside, or along the arid waste of the wilderness. They had scarcely time to arrange their little property in their tents and make all things comfortable for themselves before they heard the sound of, “Away! Away! Away! This is not your rest. You must still be onward journeying towards Canaan!” They could not plant a little patch of ground around their tent. They could not lay out their house in order and arrange their furniture. They could not become attached to the spot of ground. Even though just now their father had been buried in a place where a tent had tarried for a time, yet they must be off! They must have no attachment to the place—they must have nothing of what we call comfort, ease and peace—but be always journeying, always traveling. Moreover, so exposed were they that they never could be very easy in their tents. At one time the sand, with the hot wind behind it, would drive through the tent and cover them almost to burial. On frequent occasions the hot sun would scorch them and their canvas would scarcely be a preservation. At another time the biting north wind would freeze around them so that within their tents they sat shivering and cowering around their fires. They had little ease. But behold the contrast which Moses, the Man of God, discerns with gratitude, “You are not our tent, but You are our dwelling place. Though we are uneasy, here, though we are tossed from side to side by troubles. Though we travel through a wilderness and find it a rough pathway. Though when we sit down, here, we know not what comfort means—O Lord, in You we possess all the comforts which a house can afford! We have all that a mansion or palace can give the prince who can loll upon his couch and rest upon his bed of down. Lord, You are to us comfort! You are a house and habitation.” Have you ever known what it is to have God for your dwelling place in the sense of comfort? Do you know what it is when you have storms behind you, to feel like a seabird blown to the land by the very storm? Do you know what it is when you have been caged, sometimes, by adversity, to have the string cut by Divine Grace and like the pigeon that flies at once to its own dovecot, have you sped your way across the ether and found yourself in God? Do you know what it is, when you are tossed on the waves, to go down into the depths of the Godhead, there rejoicing that not a wave of trouble ruffles your spirit but that you are serenely at home with God, your own Almighty Father? Can you, amidst all the uneasiness of this desert journey, find a comfort? Is the breast of Jesus a sweet pillow for your head? Can you lie thus on the breast of Deity? Can you put yourself on the stream of Providence and float along without a struggle while angels sing around you—Divinely guided, Divinely led—“We are bearing you along the stream of Providence to the ocean of eternal bliss”? Do you know what it is to lie on God, to give up all care, to drive anxiety away and there—not in a recklessness of spirit, but in a holy carelessness—to be careful for nothing, “but in everything by supplication to make known your needs unto God”? If so, you have gained the first idea—“Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”

Again, the Israelites were very much exposed to all kinds of curious creatures, owing to their residing in tents and their habits of wandering. At one time the fiery serpent was their foe. By night the wild beasts prowled around them. Unless that fiery pillar had been a wall of fire around them and a glory in their midst, they might all have fallen a prey to the wild monsters that roamed the deserts! Worse foes they found in humankind. The enemy rushed down from the mountains—wild wandering hordes constantly attacked them. They never felt themselves secure, for they were travelers through an enemy’s country. They were hastening across a land where they were not wanted, to another land that was providing means to oppose them when they should arrive! Such is the Christian. He is journeying through an enemy’s land—every day he is exposed to danger. His tent may be broken down by death. The slanderer is behind him, the open foeman is before him. The wild beast that prowls by night and the pestilence that wastes by day continually seek his destruction. He finds no rest where he is. He feels himself exposed. But, says Moses, “Though we live in a tent exposed to wild beasts and fierce men, yet You are our habitation. In You we find no exposure. Within You we find ourselves secure and in Your glorious Person we dwell as in an impregnable tower of defense, safe from every fear and alarm, knowing that we are secure.” O Christian, have you ever known what it is to stand in the midst of battles with arrows flying thick around you—more than your shield can catch—and yet you have been as secure as if you were folding your arms and resting within the walls of some strong bastion where arrow could not reach you and where even the sound of trumpet could not disturb your ears? Have you known what it is to dwell securely in God— to enter into the Most High and laugh to scorn the anger, the frowns, the sneers, the contempt, the slander and calumny of men? To ascend into the sacred place of the pavilion of the Most High and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty and to feel yourself secure? And mark you, you may do this! In times of pestilence it is possible to walk in the midst of cholera and death, singing—

*“Plagues and deaths around me fly,*

*Till He please, I cannot die!”*  
It is possible to stand exposed to the utmost degree of danger and yet to feel such a holy serenity that we can laugh at fear. We become too great, too mighty, too powerful through God to stoop for one moment to the cowardice of trembling—“We know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him.” When homeless men wander. When poor distressed spirits, beaten by the storm, find no refuge, we enter into God! And shutting behind us the door of faith, we say, “Howl you winds! Blow you tempests! Roar you wild beasts! Come on you robbers—

*“He that has made his refuge God  
Shall find a most secure abode!  
Shall walk all day beneath His shade  
And there at night shall rest his head!”*

Lord, in this sense, You have been our habitation.

Again, poor Israel in the wilderness was continually exposed to change. They were never in one place long. Sometimes they might tarry for a month in one spot—just near the seventy palm trees. What a sweet and pleasant place to go out each morning, to sit beside the well and drink that clear stream! “Onward!” cries Moses. And he takes them to a place where the bare rocks stand out from the mountainside and the red burning sand is beneath their feet. Vipers spring up around them and thorny bushes grow instead of pleasing vegetation. What a change they have! Yet another day they shall come to a place that shall be still more dreary. They walk through a canyon so close and narrow that the frightened rays of the sun scarcely dare enter such a prison lest they should never find their way out again! They must go onward from place to place, continually changing, never having time to settle. Never time to say, “Now we are secure— we shall dwell in this place.” Here again, the contrast casts light upon the text—“Ah,” says Moses, “though we are always changing, Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.” The Christian knows no change with regard to God. He may be rich today and poor tomorrow. He may be sickly today and well tomorrow. He may be in happiness today, tomorrow he may be distressed. But there is no change with regard to his relationship to God! If He loved me yesterday, He loves me today! I am neither better nor worse in God than I ever was! Let prospects be blighted, let hopes be blasted, let joy be withered, let mildews destroy everything—I have lost nothing of what I have in God! He is my strong habitation whereunto I can continually resort. The Christian never becomes poorer nor never grows richer with regard to God. “Here,” he can say, “is a thing that never can pass away or change. On the brow of the Eternal there is never a furrow. His hair is unwhitened by age. His arm is unpalsied by weakness. His heart does not change in its affections—His will does not vary in its purpose. He is the Immutable Jehovah standing fast and forever! “You are our habitation! As the house changes not, but stands in the same place, so have I found You from my youth up. When first I was cast upon You from my mother’s breast, I found You my God of Providence. When first I knew You by that spiritual knowledge which You, alone, can give, I found You a sure habitation. And I find You such now. Yes, when I shall be old and gray-headed, I know You will not forsake me! You will be the same dwelling place in all generations.”

One thought more in contrasting the position of the Israelites with ourselves—that is weariness. How weary must Israel have been in the wilderness! How tired must have been the soles of their feet with their constant journeys! They were not in a place of repose, luxury and rest, but in a land of journeying and weariness and trouble. I think I see them traveling, frequently wiping the burning sweat from their brows and saying, “Oh, that we had a habitation where we might rest! Oh, that we could enter a land of vines and pomegranates, a city where we might enjoy immunity from alarm! God has promised it to us, but we have not found it. There remains a rest for the people of God—O that we might find it!” Christian, God is your habitation in this sense! He is your rest and you will never find rest except in Him. I defy a man who has no God to have a soul at rest. He who has not Jesus for his Savior will always be a restless spirit. Read some of Byron’s verses and you will find him, (if he were truly picturing himself), to be the very personification of that spirit who walked to and fro, seeking rest and finding none. Here is one of his verses—

*“I fly like a bird of the air,  
In search of a home and a rest—  
A balm for the sickness of care  
A bliss for a bosom unblest.”*

Read the lives of any men who have had no Gospel justification, or have had no knowledge of God and you will find that they were like the poor bird that had its nest pulled down and knew not where to rest, flying about, wandering and seeking a habitation. Some of you have tried to find rest out of God. You have sought to find it in your wealth. But you have pricked your head when you have laid it on that pillow! You have sought it in a friend, but that friend’s arm has been a broken reed where you hoped it would be a wall of strength! You will never find rest except in God. There is no refuge but in Him. Oh, what rest and composures are there in Him! It is more than sleep, more than calm, more than quiet, deeper than the dead stillness of the noiseless sea in its utmost depths where it is undisturbed by the slightest ripple and winds can never intrude. There is a holy calm and sweet repose which only the Christian knows—something like the slumbering stars up there in beds of azure. Or like the seraphic rest which we may suppose beatified spirits have when they are before the Throne of God—there is a rest so deep and calm, so still and quiet, so profound that we find no words to describe it! You have tried it and can rejoice in it. You know that the Lord has been your dwelling place—your sweet, calm, constant home where you can enjoy peace in all generations. But I have dwelt too long upon this part of the subject, so I will speak of it in a different way.

First of all, the dwelling place of man is the place where he can unbend himself and feel himself at home and speak familiarly. In this pulpit I must somewhat check my words. I deal with men of the world who watch my speech and are ever on the catch. Men who wish to have this or that to criticize—I must be on my guard. So you men of business, when you are on the exchange, or in your shop, have to guard yourselves. What does the man do at home? He can lay bare his breast and do and say as he pleases—it is his own house—his dwelling place. And is he not master there? Shall he not do as he will with his own? Assuredly, for he feels himself at home! Ah, my Beloved, do you ever find yourself in God to be at home? Have you been with Christ and told your secrets in His ear and found that you could do so without reserve? We do not generally tell secrets to other people, for if we do and make them promise that they will never tell them, they will never tell them except to the first person they meet! Most persons who have secrets told them are like the lady of whom it is said she never told her secrets except to two sorts of persons—those that asked her and those that did not. You must not trust men of the world! But do you know what it is to tell all your secrets to God in prayer, to whisper all your thoughts to Him? You are not ashamed to confess your sins to Him with all their aggravations. You make no apologies to God but you put in every aggravation and you describe all the depths of your baseness. Then, as for those little needs you would be ashamed to tell to another—before God you can tell them all! You can tell Him your grief that you would not whisper to your dearest friend. With God, you can always be at home. You need be under no restraint. The Christian at once gives God the key of his heart and lets Him turn everything over. He says, “Here is the key of every cabinet. It is my desire that You would open them all. If there are jewels, they are Yours. And if there are things that should not be there, drive them out. Search me and try my heart.” The more God lives in the Christian, the better the Christian loves Him. The oftener God comes to see him, the better he loves his God. And God loves His people all the more when they are familiar with Him! Can you say in this sense, “Lord, You have been my dwelling place”?

Then again, man’s home is the place where his affections are centered. God deliver us from those men who do not love their homes! Lives there a man so base, so dead, that he has no affection for his own house? If so, surely the spark of Christianity must have died entirely out! It is natural that men should love their homes. It is spiritual that they should love them. In our homes we find those to whom we must and always shall be most attached. There our best friends and kindred dwell. When we wander, we are as birds that have left their nests and can find no settled home. We wish to go back and to see again that smile—to grasp once more that loving hand and to find that we are with those to whom the ties of affection have knit us! We wish to feel—and every Christian will feel—with regard to his own family that they are the warp and woof of his nature, that he has become a part and portion of them. And there he centers his affection. He cannot afford to lavish his love everywhere. He centers it in that particular spot, that oasis in this dark desert world. Christian, is God your habitation in that sense? Have you given your whole soul to God? Do you feel you can bring your whole heart to Him and say, “O God! I love You from my soul! With the most impassioned earnestness I love you”?—

*“The dearest idol I have known—  
Whatever that idol be—  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only Thee!”*

O God! Though I sometimes wander, yet I love You in my wanderings and my heart is fixed on You. What though the creature does beguile me, I detest that creature. It is to me as the apple of Sodom. You are the Master of my soul, the Emperor of my heart. No vice-regent, but King of kings! My spirit is fixed on You as the center of my soul—

*“You are the sea of love  
Where all my pleasures roll  
The circle where my passions move—  
The center of my soul.’*

“O God! You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”

My next remark is concerning the lease of this dwelling place. God is the Believer’s habitation. Sometimes, you know, people get turned out of their houses, or their houses tumble down about their ears. It is never so with ours—God is our dwelling place throughout all generations. Let us look back in times past and we shall find that God has been our habitation—oh, the old house at home! Who does not love it, the place of our childhood, the old roof tree, the old cottage? There is no village in all the world half as good as that particular village where we were born! True, the gates, stiles and posts have been altered. But still there is an attachment to those old houses, the old tree in the park and the old ivymantled tower. It is not very picturesque, perhaps, but we love to go see it. We like to see the haunts of our boyhood. There is something pleasant in those old stairs where the clock used to stand—and the room where Grandmother was accustomed to bend her knee and where we had family prayer. There is no place like that house! Well, Beloved, God has been the habitation of the Christian in years gone by. Christian, your house is, indeed, a venerable house and you have long dwelt there! You dwelt there in the Person of Christ long before you were brought into this sinful world. And it is to be your dwelling place throughout all generations. You are never to ask for another house. You will always be contented with that one you have. You will never wish to change your habitation. And if you wished it, you could not, for He is your dwelling place in all generations! God give you to know what it is to take this house in its long lease and always to have God for your dwelling place!

II. Now I come to improve this text somewhat. First, let us improve it to SELF-EXAMINATION. How may we know whether we are Christians or not? Whether the Lord is our dwelling place and will be throughout all generations? I shall give you some hints for self-examination by referring you to several passages which I have looked up in the first Epistle of John. It is remarkable that almost the only Scriptural writer who speaks of God as a dwelling place is that most loving Apostle, John, out of whose Epistle we have been reading.

He gives us in his First Epistle, the 12th verse of the 4th Chapter, one means of knowing whether we are living in God—“If we love one another, God dwells in us and His love is perfected in us.” And again, further on, he says, “And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love. And he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.” You may then tell whether you are a tenant of this great spiritual house by the love you have towards others! Have you a love towards the saints? Well, then you are a saint yourself! The goats will not love the sheep. And if you love the sheep, it is an evidence that you are a sheep yourself. Many of the Lord’s weak family never can get any other evidences of their conversion except this—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” And though that is a very little evidence, yet it is such a one that the strongest faith often cannot get a much better. What? Has the devil told you you are not the Lord’s? Poor Faint-Heart, do you love the Lord’s people? “Yes,” you say, “I love to see their faces and to hear their prayers. I could almost kiss the hem of their garments.” Is it so? And would you give to them if they were poor? Would you visit them if they were sick and tend to them if they needed assistance? “Ah, yes.” Then fear not! You who love God’s people. You must love the Master. We know we dwell in God if we love one another.

In the 13th verse is another sign—“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” Have we ever had the Spirit of God in us? That is one of the most solemn questions I can ask. Many of you know what it is to be excited by religious feeling who never had the Spirit of God. Many of us have great need to tremble lest we should not have received that Spirit. I have tried, myself, scores of times, in different ways, to see whether I really am a possessor of the Spirit of God or not. I know that the people of the world scoff at the idea and say, “It is impossible for anybody to have the Spirit of God.” Then it is impossible for anybody to go to Heaven! For we must have the Spirit of God—we must be born-again of the Spirit before we can enter there! What a serious question this is—“Have I the Spirit of God in me?” True, my soul is at times lifted on high and I feel that I could sing like a seraph. True, sometimes I am melted down by deep devotion and I could pray in terrible solemnity. But so can hypocrites, perhaps. Have I the Spirit of God? Have you any evidence within you that you have the Spirit? Are you sure that you are not laboring under a delusion and a dream? Have you actually the Spirit of God within you? If so, you dwell in God. That is the second sign.

But the Apostle gives another sign in the 15th verse—“Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God.” The confession of our faith in the Savior is another sign that we live in God. Oh, Poor-Heart, can you not come under this sign? You may have but little boldness, but can you not say, “I believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”? If so, you dwell in God! Many of you, I know, say, “When I hear a sermon, I feel affected by it. When I am in the House of God, I feel like a child of God, but the business, cares and troubles of life take me off and then I fear I am not.” But you can say, “I do believe in Christ. I know I cast myself on His mercy and hope to be saved by Him.” Then do not say you are not a child of God if you have faith!

But there is one more sign whereby we ought to examine ourselves, in the 3rd Chapter, 24th verse—“he that keeps His commandments dwells in

Him and He in him.” Obedience to the commandments of God is a blessed sign of a dwelling in God! Some of you have a deal of religious talk, but not much religious walk. A large stock of outside piety, but not much real inward piety which develops itself in your actions. That is a hint for some of you who know that it is right to be baptized and are not. You know it is one of the commandments of God, that “he that believes shall be baptized,” and you are neglecting what you know to be your duty. You are dwelling in God, I doubt not, but you lack one evidence of it, namely—obedience to God’s commandments. Obey God and then you will know that you are dwelling in Him!

But I have another word by way of improvement and that is one of CONGRATULATION. You who dwell in God, allow me to congratulate you. Thrice happy men are you if you are dwelling in God! You need not blush to compare yourselves with angels. You need not think that any on earth can share such happiness as yours! Zion, oh, how blessed are you, freed from all sins! Now you are, through Christ, made to dwell in God and, therefore, are eternally secure. I congratulate you, Christians! First, in that you have such a magnificent house to dwell in. You have not a palace that shall be as gorgeous as Solomon’s—a mighty palace as immense as the dwellings of the kings of Assyria, or Babylon—but you have a God that is more than mortal creatures can behold! You dwell in an immortal fabric. You dwell in the Godhead—something which is beyond all human skill! I congratulate you, moreover, that you live in such a perfect house. There never was a house on earth that could not be made a little better. But the house you dwell in has everything you need. In God you have all you require. I congratulate you, moreover, that you live in a house that shall last forever. A dwelling place that shall not pass away! When this world shall have been scattered like a dream—when, like the bubble on the breaker, creation shall have died away—when all this universe shall have died out like a spark from an expiring brand, your house shall live and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God! Be happy, then!

Now, lastly, a word of ADMONITION AND WARNING to some of you. My Hearers, what a pity it is that we have to divide our congregation— that we cannot speak to you in a mass as being all Christians! This morning I would that I could take God’s Word and address it to you all— that you all might share the sweet promises it contains. But some of you would not have them if I were to offer them! Some of you despise Christ, my blessed Master! Many of you think sin but a trifle and Grace to be worthless. You think Heaven is a vision, and Hell a fiction. Some of you are careless and hardened and thoughtless—without God and without Christ! Oh, my Hearers, I wonder at myself that I should have so little benevolence that I do not preach more fervently to you! I think if I could get a right estimate of your souls’ value, I would not speak as I do now, with stammering tongue, but with flaming words! I have great cause to blush at my own slothfulness, though God knows I have strived to preach His Truth as vehemently as possible and would spend myself in His service. But I wonder why I do not stand in every street in London and preach His Truth! When I think of the thousands of souls in this great city that have never heard of Jesus, that have never listened to Him. When I think of how much ignorance exists and how little Gospel preaching there is, how few souls are saved, I think—O God, what little Grace I must have, that I do not strive more for souls!

One word by way of warning. Do you know, poor Soul, that you have not a house to live in? You have a house for your body, but no house for your soul. Have you ever seen a poor girl at midnight sitting down on a door step crying? Somebody passes by and says, “Why do you sit here?” “I have no house, Sir. I have no home.” “Where is your father?” “My father’s dead, Sir.” “Where is your mother?” “I have no mother, Sir.” “Have you no friends?” “No friends at all.” “Have you no house?” “No, I have none. I am homeless.” And she shivers in the chill air and gathers her poor ragged shawl around her and cries again, “I have no house—I have no home.” Would you not pity her? Would you blame her for her tears? Ah, there are some of you that have homeless souls here, this morning! It is something to have a homeless body. But to think of a homeless soul! I think I see you in eternity, sitting on the doorstep of Heaven. An angel says, “What? Have you no house to live in?” “No house,” says the poor soul. “Have you no father?” “No, God is not my father. And there is none beside Him.” “Have you no mother?” “No. The Church is not my mother, I never sought her ways, nor loved Jesus. I have neither father nor mother.” “Have you no house, then?” “No, I am a homeless soul.”

But there is one thing worse about that—homeless souls have to be sent into Hell! To a dungeon. To a lake that burns with fire. Houseless soul! In a little while your body will be gone. And where will you house yourself when the hot hail of eternal vengeance comes from Heaven? Where will you hide your guilty head when the winds of the Last Judgment Day shall sweep on you with fury? Where will you shelter yourself when the blast of the Terrible One shall be as a storm against a wall— when the darkness of eternity comes upon you and Hell thickens round you? It will be all in vain for you to cry, “Rocks, hide me! Mountains, fall upon me!”—the rocks will not obey you, the mountains will not hide you. Caverns would be palaces if you could dwell in them, but there will be no caverns for you to hide your head in. You will be homeless souls, homeless spirits, wandering through Hell tormented, destitute, afflicted! And that throughout eternity! Poor homeless Soul, do you need a house? I have a house to let this morning for every sinner who feels his misery— do you need a house for your soul? Then I will condescend to men of low estate and tell you in homely language that I have a house to let! Do you ask me what is the purchase price? I will tell you. It is something less than proud human nature will like to give. It is without money and without price. Ah, you would like to pay some rent wouldn’t you? You would love to do something to win Christ. Then you cannot have the house! It is “without money and without price.” I have told you enough of the house, itself, and, therefore, I will not describe its excellencies. But I will tell you one thing—if you feel you are a homeless soul this morning, you may not have the key tomorrow! If you feel yourself to be a homeless soul, today, you may enter it now! If you had a house of your own, I would not offer it to you. But since you have no other, here it is. Will you take my Master’s house on a lease for all eternity, with nothing to pay for it, nothing but the ground rent of loving and serving Him forever? Will you take Jesus and dwell in Him throughout eternity? Or will you be content to be a homeless soul? Come inside, Sir. See, it is furnished from top to bottom with all you need. It has cellars filled with gold, more than you will spend as long as you live. It has a parlor where you can entertain yourself with Christ and feast on His love. It has tables well stored with food for you to live on forever. It has a drawing room of brotherly love where you can receive your friends. You will find a resting room up there where you can rest with Jesus! And on the top, there is a lookout from where you can see Heaven, itself! Will you have the house, or will you not? Ah, if you are homeless, you will say, “I should like to have the house. But may I have it?” Yes here is the key. The key is, “Come to Jesus.” But you say, “I am too shabby for such a house.” Never mind. There are garments inside. As Rowland Hill once said—

*“Come naked, come filthy, come ragged, come poor!*

*Come wretched, come dirty, come just as you are!”*If you feel guilty and condemned, come, and though the house is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the house, by-andby! He will wash you and cleanse you and you will yet be able to sing with Moses, with the same unfaltering voice, “Lord, You have been my dwelling place throughout all generations.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2987 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE “BEAU IDEAL” OF LIFE  
NO. 2987

**A SERMON  
ESPECIALLY TO YOUNG MEN,**  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 1875.

**“O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we  
may rejoice and be glad all our days.”  
Psalm 90:14.**

MOSES saw, with deep regret, that the great host which came out of Egypt would have to die in the wilderness. Every day there were many funerals, for a vast multitude of men, women and children had to be buried in the wilderness. And tears of sorrow and sympathy must continually have stood in the eyes of the great leader of the children of Israel. After speaking about their days being passed away in God’s wrath, Moses offered a prayer which, under the circumstances, was most natural and most wise. It was in substance this—“Lord, if we must die in this desert. If this whole generation (except Caleb and Joshua) must pass away in the wilderness, then, at any rate, give us the fullness of Your favor now, that we may spend all our remaining days—whether they are to be few or many—in gladness and rejoicing.” Now, seeing that we, also, are all passing away and that whether young or old, we, too, must be carried to the grave unless the Lord should first return, this seems to me to be a very wise prayer for us to put up—“Lord, satisfy us with Your mercy now, that we may waste no more of our life in sinful dissatisfaction, but that from this hour to the last moment of our life, we may be filled with Your favor, and may rejoice and be glad all our days.

I. Just for a minute or two, I want, in the first place, to show you that Moses has here set before us THE “BEAU IDEAL” OF LIFE.  
If one could have just such a life as he desired, could he desire anything better than to be satisfied early with God’s favor? Would it not be a very delightful thing if the whole of his life could be spent exactly as it ought to be and could be spent in the enjoyment of the highest degree of happiness of which we are capable? “O satisfy us,” is the prayer of the text—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” If the young man—instead of seeking after something which he will still continue to seek after if he is spared to reach the prime of life—and will still seek after even when he grows gray, could get that which would content him at once. If he could get something which would immediately fill his soul and make it run over with thankfulness and joy—would it not be a great blessing to him, especially if he could get it, as Moses says, “early”—soon—in the very beginning of his life? Many men, even good men, have wasted the early morning of their days. And some have had the painful experience of looking back, in the afternoon of life, upon the best part of their day and even the noontide, all gone—and there has been for them only the evening and, sometimes, only a very short evening to spend in complete satisfaction and real joy. It is a pity that so many Christian’s lives should, for all practical purposes, be influential at the end of their stay on earth—that as far as their influence upon others is concerned, they should be merely like the candle-ends that we put upon the save-alls— but the whole candle has never been consumed in giving light in the sanctuary of God. It is a thing to be desired beyond measure that from the first to the last of life, God’s blessing should rest upon us and that we should enjoy peace and happiness without any intermingling of the distress which is caused by sin. This, as I have said, seems to me to be the beau ideal of life—and I think that all Christians, at least, will agree with me.  
It is a poor way of building a house to have a flaw in the foundation, for, however carefully we may build the superstructure, we can never make a satisfactory building because of the flaw down below. It is poor weaving on the part of the man at the loom, when he has a flaw at the beginning of his work—however carefully he may weave the latter portion of it, he will always know that he cannot get that old flaw out—that the piece of cloth will never be perfect. In contrast to this kind of building and weaving, it would be a blessed thing to have such Grace and such wisdom given that the very first course of the foundation of the house of life should be well and truly laid, and that the whole building should be to the praise and glory of God! And it would be equally blessed that the very first throws of the shuttle of the web of life should be in accordance with the right rules for weaving, so that the whole piece of cloth might be pronounced perfect after its kind. I think this is the meaning of the prayer of the text, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”  
II. Secondly, as we judge this satisfaction to be the beau ideal of life, let us consider HOW SOME PEOPLE HAVE SOUGHT TO ATTAIN IT.  
I do not hesitate to say that the first part of the text is the cry of all men—  
*“O satisfy us, satisfy us, satisfy us!”*  
But there is a kind of horse-leech in every man’s soul that is not easily satisfied. It is like death, the grave and the sea. Whatever may be cast into the mouth of death, it is as hungry as it was before! And the sepulcher is never satisfied and, throw what you will into the sea, it is always ready to receive more. So is it with the hearts of men. “O satisfy us,” is the world’s cry as the heathens shout to their idol gods and as the priests of Baal cried to their lifeless image. “O satisfy us,” is the world’s cry today, for man’s hunger is insatiable, though he disdains the only food which would satisfy his cravings. “O satisfy us,” is the cry which is heard in every quarter of the globe—alas, not ascending to Heaven, as it should, but going out to the things of time and sense! Still do men seek satisfaction in that which Solomon calls “vanity of vanities.”  
Wise young men pray, in the words of the text, “O satisfy us early.” They want to get that which is to be the source of their joy, not when they can no longer enjoy it, but now, so they cry, “satisfy us early.” They do not ask for God’s mercy merely as a sort of pension for their old age, but they want to have it now. At any rate, I know that I did, for I wished to obtain whatever of gladness and joy could be had even in my youthful days. There is nothing wrong in desiring to be happy. There is nothing wrong in offering the prayer, “O satisfy us early,” so long as that prayer is completed in the way in which my text completes it—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.”  
Many have tried to satisfy themselves by gaining money. This is a pursuit in which a man may lawfully engage if it is not the chief objective of his life, as so many make it. They believed that they would be satisfied when they had acquired a certain amount, but they were not. I might confidently ask every man of wealth, now in this world, whether he was satisfied when he reached the amount which he had himself fixed as the limit of his desire? Did he not then feel that he must have more than that amount? Of course he did! So he set before him another sum and he said that when he had accumulated that amount, he would be content. But was he? Is not the desire for wealth a thing which grows with that it feeds upon, so that the more a man has, the more he wants? There never did live and there never could live, a man whose entire nature could be satisfied with his worldly possessions. You know that we call the man who delights in hoarding up riches—a miser. Why do we call him by that name unless it is because he is truly miserable? The very name for the man who is engrossed with avarice signifies unhappiness—and when you need to describe somebody who is both aged and wretched, you say, “He is like an old miser.” Yes, so he is. Men may amass as much wealth as they will, but if, with the money, they have not acquired something better than the best metal that ever came from the mint or the mine, they will still go on crying, “O satisfy us! O satisfy us!” The Indians of South America believed that the Spaniards’ god was made of gold and well they might when they saw the strangers’ devotion to their idol! They once poured molten gold down a Spaniard’s throat, saying, “You have thirsted for it, now you shall have enough of it.” But if a man could eat gold, drink gold, sleep with gold, walk with gold and be robed in gold, yet, still, what is there in that metal which could satisfy the cravings of the highest part of man’s nature—that mysterious spiritual thing which is called the soul? No, there is no solid satisfaction for the soul in all the wealth in the world!  
Others have despised this gross pursuit and they have said that satisfaction is to be found in fame. We, all of us, like respect, esteem, honor. It is false for any man to say that he does not like praise, for he does. And if anyone is pleased at being told that he does not like flattery, he is there being more highly flattered than at any other time of his life— and he is enjoying the sensation! Some men, to gain honors and distinction in various ways, have made complete slaves of themselves. They have supposed that if they could but get the honors—perhaps the honor of a degree at the university, or the honor of a certain rank in the profession of the law, or even in the church, they would be satisfied. But no man was ever yet satisfied with honors. They are but as a puff of wind which can never fill an immortal soul. If you read the histories of those statesman who have risen to the greatest heights of fame, you will, as a rule, find that the most famous man in the kingdom is generally the greatest slave. He has, from the very weight of his honors, the heavier burden of responsibility to bear. As “uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,” so, in its degree, uneasy lies the head that wears the laurel or the crown. There is no contentment to be found in fame, as those have proved who have won the most of it. There was a time when the flattery of two or three poor people in a village would have satisfied them, but now the plaudits of a whole nation seem as nothing to them—and when the whole world is ringing with their renown, they sit down in despondency, wring their hands in misery, and cry, with Solomon, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

Others have said, “But surely there is something solid and satisfying in learning.” Well, there is more to be said for this than for either of the other two things that I have mentioned and, as far as I am concerned, I would sooner seek satisfaction in my library than in the marble halls of the wealthy or in the courts of kings! To study, to read, to make discoveries, to furnish the brain, to enrich the mind—there is something worth doing in all this, yet Solomon, who carried out this idea as far as it could be carried out in his day, recorded his very emphatic verdict concerning it, “Much study is a weariness of the flesh.” “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” is very apt to also be your utterance with regard to study, for you always have the dreary thought that even if you could know more than all other men in the world, when your turn came to sleep in the grave, there would be no difference between you and the peasant of whom Wordsworth wrote—  
*“A primrose by a river’s brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.”*  
If the peasant rises no higher than that, however learned any of us may be, we have only risen a little above him for a time—and in the common dust we, too, shall sleep with him! If there were no eternal futures, what would all the joys of earthly knowledge be worth to us?  
Others seek satisfaction in pleasure. I may be addressing some young man who says, “I do not care for wealth. I shall never trouble myself to hoard it. On the contrary, I love to spend it! I do not want to use a rake— give me a shovel and I will soon scatter all my father’s substance!” There are some men who are very proficient in scattering what others have gathered with great diligence. These people say concerning study, “Let us get out of these crowded rooms into the pure, fresh air! We mean to go in for pleasure and to enjoy ourselves while we can.” This looks, at first sight, as if it were a prudent thing to do and, certainly, there is a deal more sense in enjoying ourselves in a rational fashion than there can be in pinching and starving ourselves in order to hoard up money for heirs who will ridicule if they do not actually curse those who have provided so bountifully for them! Remember what Solomon says about others who seek what they call pleasure—“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? They who tarry long at the wine; they who go to seek mixed wine.” There is no satisfaction there! The merriest man who ever lived—the man who drained the wine-cup of mirth even to its dregs—has dashed it to the ground in his fierce indignation and cursed the day in which he tried to find satisfaction there! Look at those who have gone to the house of the strange woman and see what comes of their sinful sojourning there—even if it is only for a little while. Does not dissipation bring disease and decay upon nature sooner than necessary? There is no satisfaction there, young man! So, if you want to really enjoy yourself, there is a nobler and a surer way of doing so. The way of socalled “pleasure” is a delusion and a snare, and the end thereof is sorrow, suffering and woe! Alas, that so many should continue to walk in a way which has such a sad end!  
When a man plays the fool, let him do it for something that is worth having. Some time ago, when we were looking for a place for Messrs. Moody and Sankey to preach and sing, two of our Brothers went to see whether a certain building could be rented and, while they were waiting there, a man came up to them and presented his card—“Mr. So-and-So, clown.” He thought our Brothers had gone to engage the place for some amusements! They told him that they had come to engage it for religious services and one of them said to him, “What a pity it is that you should play the fool for money!” I think the clown made a very sensible remark in reply, for he said, “You had better go and talk to those who play the fool and make nothing by it, for there is some sense in playing the fool for money.” To play the fool and make nothing by it, is a very mild description of the folly of which I have been speaking! But how many play the fool and lose money by it? What is it that clothes so many people in rags? What is it that makes so many have red eyes, trembling limbs and even delirium tremens? What is that but playing the fool and losing by it? And what will it be when such a man comes to die—a man who has lived without God, without Christ and who will be without hope in his death? That will be playing the fool with a vengeance! And the Truth of God will come home to him that the eternal ruin of his soul is the cost of his folly!  
If you were to realize what this kind of “pleasure” means, you would have nothing to do with it! When Mount Vesuvius suddenly began pouring forth its lava upon Pompeii, most of the inhabitants were assembled in the amphitheatre. I have seen the ruins of the place where they were gathered. I do not know what spectacle was on at the time, but however interesting it may have been, there was not a man, or woman, or child who did not run as fast as they could to wherever they hoped they might find a place of refuge! A few persons remained in their habitations, or were unable to escape—and there they are to this day. Some of their bodies have been lately discovered in the very positions in which they were overtaken by the eruption. If men were wise, the merriest play that ever was acted upon the face of the earth, the richest golden gains that ever lay before a merchant, the choicest pleasures that ever tempted the human heart would never induce them to tarry till they were forever lost—but they would be up and away and never rest till they had escaped from the wrath to come!  
Some seem to have no real objective in life. I think I hear someone say, “Well, I have cared for none of those things that you have mentioned.” Where then, my Friend, have you tried to find satisfaction? “Oh, I have not troubled my head about that! I just plod along from day to day, working hard to earn my daily bread. I do not know that I have any ambition in this world except to pay my way, have enough to eat and to drink, and clothes to put on, and bring up my children as well as I can.” Rest assured, my Friend, that I do not despise you for having such desires. At the same time, I do think that it is a pity for an immortal soul not to have some aim and objective higher and brighter than that, for it is pretty nearly the objective of a mill-horse that goes round and round in its daily course and never aims at anything higher. Your objective is very much like that of a swallow, or a sparrow which builds its nest, and lays its eggs and hatches them, and sees its young flying off on their own account. Your ambition might be suitable for a dog, or a horse, or a cat, but it is not worthy of you—a being of a higher order! When I look at you and remember that you were made in the image of God, I think that, surely, there must be something worth living for—something nobler than this poor ambition of yours! I ask you honestly to say whether you have found satisfaction there—and I am fully persuaded that you have not.  
There are some who argue that the Gospel cannot bless them. I frequently hear this kind of talk from poor working people. One says, “Well, Sir, if I were well-to-do, then I think I ought to be a Christian, but religion is not for the poor.” That is in direct opposition to the declaration of Christ, Himself, that “the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” And to the Inspired question, “Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?” Yet many people will have it that the Gospel is not for them because they are so poor!  
I have also heard some say that they are so ignorant that they cannot be saved. One says, “I cannot read,” and another says, “I can read, but I cannot understand what I read in the Bible. And when I go to hear a sermon, I cannot make out what is meant by it.” They make out that they are almost idiots with regard to spiritual matters, yet, on any other subject, they would stick up for themselves and try to prove that they are almost philosophers! Yet their plea that ignorance prevents them from being saved is directly contrary to Scripture, for the Apostle Paul, Inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Corinthians, “For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.”  
Then, again, others say that they are too busy to be saved! At least that is the practical meaning of their excuse. One says, “Now, do not bother me about religion, for I really have not time to think about such things as that. See, I have to be up early in the morning and to work hard till late at night.” Another says, “My business cares are so numerous that I cannot get away from the counting-house to go to a Prayer Meeting.” Ah, dear Friends, but how many people who have not been able to find time to pray, have had to find time to die? And how very frequently do we see that the very people who say that they have not had time to think about the things of God, have found plenty of time for indulgence in vice and sinful pleasures! That excuse, like the others I have mentioned, will not avail any of those who make it. There is time enough for the most hard-worked man to lift his eyes to Heaven and to cry, “O Lord, for Jesus Christ’s sake, accept me, for I come to You trusting in His atoning Sacrifice!” With many, the excuse is only an excuse, for they do not want Christ and they do not believe that there is anything for them in Christ and, therefore, they make these vain excuses.

I have known some even to say that they are too sinful to come to Christ—other people may be saved, but they could never be—they have gone too far into sin and they are too much involved in sin. They are so old and they have so many friends and connections on the side of evil. Perhaps they are in a business that is not honest and they are so interlaced with bad men that they cannot get out of it. So they say—and they will say anything so as to hide that which is really at the bottom of their hearts—which is that they do not want Jesus Christ to save them. They would rather that He should leave them alone to go quietly on their own way, even though that way will inevitably lead them to everlasting destruction!  
III. Now, in closing my discourse, I want to tell you WHERE REAL SATISFACTION CAN BE FOUND. It came in answer to the prayer of the text. “O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”  
Let me try and teach you, as plainly as I can, the way to find solid satisfaction. Friend, you are young and life is before you. You would gladly make it a whole life, altogether happy. Begin, then, by realizing that there is need for you to seek satisfaction from God. If you were an animal, you could be easily satisfied. Sheep and oxen are perfectly satisfied if you turn them into a field where there is plenty of grass. They never stand and cry, “O satisfy us,” but they eat as much as they need and then they are perfectly content. But you, though placed in a world of wondrous beauty and though, as a man, you are made capable of great happiness, have not obtained it! So you may as well begin your search for it by the confession that you are a fallen creature. You have lost the peerless jewel of innocence. Your first father, Adam, lost it as your representative and you have also lost it on your own account. If you had not lost it, you would not need to pray to God, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy,” for you would already be satisfied! Adam was satisfied as long as he kept from sinning against God—and you, also, would be satisfied if there were no sin in you. Let this confession be made by each one of you, “Lord, I am unsatisfied because I am unholy. I have not attained to satisfaction because I have not attained to perfection.”  
Then, remember that if you are ever to get satisfaction, you will have to get it from God—and it must come from Him as the gift of His mercy. The text says, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” God has so made us that we cannot get on without Him. It is both a blessing and a curse that it is so—it is a blessing that we cannot be satisfied without God, for that necessity helps to draw us to Him—but it is a curse if we continue to try to be satisfied without Him. As the planet needs the sun, so man needs his God. As the eye is nothing without light, so your spirit is nothing without God. You must have God! Yet, up till now, some of you have not even thought of Him. Getting what you needed here below has occupied all your attention! But as for God, perhaps you have not thought of Him, or if you have thought of Him, you have only done so to wish that there were no God. The thought of God has been a troublesome subject to you—you wish you could dismiss it altogether from your mind. But, my Friend, if you are ever to get satisfaction, this state of things must be altered! You must recognize that, as a creature, you must be at peace with your Creator. I do not ask you to take my word for this assertion, but I do urge you to search the Scriptures to see whether it is not so. There you will learn that until the quarrel between you and God is ended—until you submit to God and are at peace with Him—your soul cannot find rest any more than Noah’s dove could find rest as she flew over the wild waste of waters and discovered no place for the sole of her feet to rest.  
Do not forget that you cannot come back to God unless God shall display His mercy to you! If you appeal to Divine Justice, you will find that it must punish you, for, young as you are, you have broken God’s holy Law. You have committed sins which have provoked the Lord to anger and jealousy—and before you can be reconciled to Him and have His love shed abroad in your heart, these sins of yours must be forgiven. They can be forgiven, for God delights in mercy! They can be forgiven now, for He waits to be gracious. They can be forgiven without money and without price, for He freely pardons all those who put their trust in Jesus Christ, His Son!  
But suppose your past sins were all forgiven? You could not, even then, get satisfaction because there would still be in you a natural tendency to sin. You can, all of you, sin without being taught to do it. There is no need to found an institution for the purpose of teaching the practice of vice, or to employ agents to excite men to commit crime—he natural bias of the human heart is in that direction! Now, as long as you love sin and your heart has a bias towards evil, God and you cannot walk together. Thousands of years ago He asked the question, “Can two walk together except they are agreed?” It is necessary, therefore, that there should be a complete change in your nature, for it can never be content as it is. Whatever God might give it, even if He were to give it Heaven, itself—your nature would never be satisfied while it remained as it now is. Your nature is diseased and must be healed—otherwise it will be with you as it would be with a sick man if you piled up his room with gold, or heaped up learned volumes all around him and bade him study them! They would not take away his pains—it is the disease, itself, that needs to be cured.  
So is it with the malady of your spirit. You must be make right with God or, as Christ Himself put it, you must be born-again. Now, if you could be made a new creature with a will perfectly conformed to God’s will, with a heart that loved what God loved and hated what God hated, with a spirit within you as pure as God, Himself, is, with a mind which sought only after purity and abhorred everything that was evil, and if, in addition to that, all your past sins could be forgiven, would not that be a grand and a blessed thing? There is many a man who has lived a life of crime and shame, who, when he sees a little curly-headed boy kneel down to say his prayers at his mother’s knees, remembers when he did the same and wishes that he could be put into a mill and be ground young again. That is the kind of thing that would give you satisfaction— and that is just what Jesus Christ came to do for those who believe in Him, for He has come into the world to “save His people from their sins.” That is, not merely to save them from being punished for sin, but to deliver them from the sin itself! He can give you, my Friends, a new heart and a right spirit. He says, “Behold, I make all things new,” and those who believe in Him are made new creatures in Christ Jesus!  
“Oh,” says one, “I wish I were a new creature in Christ.” Why should you not be? He that believes in Jesus has the witness of the Spirit within his heart and this is a sure sign that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, for the first result of regeneration is true saving faith! So, if you trust in Jesus, that is a positive proof that you are born-again. Then see what will come of this great change. You will begin your new life with a new nature, a nature that loves God and hates evil—a nature that longs for conformity with the will of God! You will begin your new career “accepted in the Beloved,” with a life within you that can never die and with a pardon granted to you that can never be reversed! You shall be so completely saved that you shall never return to the old follies and sins in which you formerly lived because you will not be saved because somebody has persuaded you to live in a different fashion, but because you have been made altogether a new creature!  
“What?” asks someone, “Shall I be perfect when this change comes?” No, there is a nature in you which will still remain and with which you will have to fight and wrestle. But the new life, which Christ will give you, will enable you to overcome it. “Well,” says one, “I do not see how that is to bring me satisfaction.” But it will! This is a great mystery, but it is a great Truth of God. Possibly you are dissatisfied because you cannot bring the contents of your pocket up to the height of your wishes. But if you bring your wishes down to the level of the contents of your pocket, you will be satisfied with what you now have! You cannot get all that you want, but suppose that your wants are reduced to your actual needs? How will it be, then? You cannot, at present, expect to have all that your heart desires, but suppose your heart is renewed by Grace so that you do not desire what God does not see fit to give you—will not that be the way for you to obtain satisfaction? If the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet had better go to the mountain! And if we cannot change our outward circumstances, we had better be content with such things as we have.  
We have been born into a world where there is much sin and much sorrow, where no man can have all that he wishes—and it is a grand thing when our wishes get changed, our desires get altered and we become altogether different from what we used to be! This is the path that leads to satisfaction! Some people seem to think that if they had what I have, they would be perfectly content. But I am quite certain that if they had it, they would be utterly dissatisfied with my portion! Yet I am perfectly satisfied with it—not perfectly satisfied with myself, for that I never shall be while I am down here—but I am perfectly satisfied with what God does for me and with me. That satisfaction is what every Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a right to enjoy! And when he lives as a Believer should live, he does enjoy it, and he can sing with good Mr. Watts—  
*“I would not change my blest estate  
For all that earth calls good or great!  
And while my faith can keep her hold,  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”*  
The garden of such a man as I am just now describing is a very little one, but he walks in his rich neighbor’s park and he thanks God that it does not belong to him, for he has not the trouble and expense of keeping it in order, yet he can probably enjoy it quite as much as its owner can! He goes to the top of a hill and he knows that all he can see is in a certain king’s dominions, but he is glad that he is not the king, for he does not want the trouble of ruling a kingdom! He thanks God for the beauties of Nature which are all his—he knows that the mountains and the valleys, the sea and the sky are all his because they are his Father’s, so he may enjoy them to the fullest. He thanks God that he does not need to put the sun into his pocket, nor to keep the moon in a cupboard all to himself— all things in the world are his as much as he needs them, but he rejoices to know that his fellow creatures may also enjoy them as much as he does.

He is brought, by the Grace of God, into such a state of mind that the joy of others is his joy, and that the sorrow of others is his sorrow. And he would not wish to forego this enlargement and expansion of his mind. The Grace of God has put him into such a condition of heart and soul that, on the land or on the sea, on a bed of sickness or walking about with the elasticity of health, he says, “It is all right, for my Father has ordained it all. He gives or He takes away. He kills or He makes alive and as He does it, all is well and I am perfectly satisfied with it—and as long as I live, I will bless His holy name.” Now, that is the truly happy man and this is the only way to be really happy! Trust in Jesus, rest wholly upon Him and He will renew your spirit and change your heart—and with that change of heart He will give you capacities for happiness which you never can have in any other way!  
My dear young Friends, I want to speak these last few words especially to you. If my older friends here are not yet converted, I pray that they may soon be saved and I thank God that we have seen many such saved. No old man or old woman has any need or reason to despair! I have seen people of 70 and 80 years of age—and more than that—converted to Christ. He does not limit His Grace to any age. If you were 5,000 years old, I would be bound to preach the same Gospel to you as if you were a little child—whatever your age, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! But, at the same time, we cannot make you old people begin life again. We cannot take you back to the years of youth. Possibly you wish that we could! But as for you young people, we long for you to be satisfied early with God’s mercy, that you may rejoice and be glad all your days! Are you fifteen, or 16 years of age? There was a time, I daresay, when you thought your brother was wonderfully old because he had got into his teens—but you do not feel very old, do you? But you think you will have reached a great age when you get to be forty! Perhaps, then, you will think that it is the people of sixty, or seventy, or eighty, or 90 years of age who are getting old, and not you! But let me assure you that now, now, NOW is your time!  
I would not, God knows, deceive you about this matter for all the wealth there is in the world. I have known the Lord, blessed be His name, since I was 15 years of age, and there has never been a moment since then, in which I have regretted putting my trust in Him. A great many times I have mourned that I did not trust Him sooner and that I have not trusted Him better—but never once have I wished to go back to my former condition and leave my dear Lord and Master! You know that we sometimes hear servants speak well of their master before other people’s faces—when they think their master will hear of it. But when they get together, a lot of them around the fire, no telling what they say about their master, then! But when you gather around the fire, or when you meet with any of my particular friends, ask them whether they ever heard me say a word, in public or in private, against my Master! On the contrary, I love to tell everybody how kind and good He has been to me— and to my most intimate friends I delight to relate all that I know about Him. I can tell you one thing, if a man serves a master who treats him badly, he will not be likely to bring his boy to that place of business—but it is my greatest delight to see my two boys serving my dear Lord and Master! If He had been a bad Master to me, I would have said to them, “Now, boys, do not, either of you, make the mistake that I have made in serving the Lord Jesus Christ as I have done.” Oh, no, they have never heard me talk like that! They know how I rejoiced when I found them believing in Jesus Christ and afterwards beginning to do what they could in His service! Young people, your godly mothers and fathers would not be anxious to make you miserable. You have no idea that they want you to be wretched and sad, have you? No, but it is because they have found such supreme delight in the service of God that they want you to find your delight in it, too! I have gone up and down this country and traveled a good deal in other countries, too, and I think I may say, without exaggeration, that I have talked with many thousands of Christians and I have heard some strange things from some of them—but, up to this moment, I have never met with any Christians who have said to me, “We are all mistaken, after all. There is no solid satisfaction to be found in Jesus Christ.”  
I have seen some of these Christians at the time when men’s hearts speak out, if ever they do! I have seen them die. I have visited the dear consumptive girl in her last hours and I have been with the gray-headed saint who has passed his fourscore years, when the time came for him to die! It has been my lot to stand by many death beds and I can honestly say that if I wanted to enjoy the most intense pleasure that is possible on earth, I would seek out some dying saint that I might witness his rapturous joy and hear his gladsome and cheering testimony to his Lord and Savior! A man usually speaks the truth when he comes face to face with death and eternity is opening before him. Most men put off their masquerading, then, and appear in their true colors. And it is then that Christians speak best concerning Christ! And often the loudest songs and the sweetest praise that they have ever given to Him, they lay at His feet, then, just before they go away from earth to go to be with Him forever!  
Dear young Friends, the way of the highest happiness is the way of absolute trust in Jesus, giving yourself up to the renewing of the Holy Spirit that you may become new creatures in Christ Jesus! May God, in His Infinite mercy, grant that this great work of Grace may be worked in every unsaved soul in this assembly before you leave this building! And it will be if you simply rely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will then take you by the hand and make all things new to you. God grant it, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #513 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE YOUNG MAN’S PRAYER  
NO. 513

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”  
Psalm 90:14.**

ISRAEL had suffered a long night of affliction. Dense was the darkness while they abode in Egypt, and cheerless was the glimmering twilight of that wilderness which was covered with their graves. Amidst a thousand miracles of mercy, what must have been the sorrows of a camp in which every stop was marked with many burials—until the whole trail was a long cemetery? I suppose that the deaths in the camp of Israel was never less than fifty each day—if not three times that number—so that they learned experimentally that verse of the Psalm, “For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.”

Theirs was the weary march of men who wander about in search of tombs. They traveled towards a land which they could never reach, weary with a work the result of which only their children should receive. You may easily understand how these troubled ones longed for the time when the true day of Israel should dawn, when the black midnight of Egypt, and the dark twilight of the wilderness should both give way to the rising sun of the settled rest in Canaan. Most fitly was the prayer offered by Moses— the representative man of all that host—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” Hasten the time when we shall come to our promised rest. Bring on speedily the season when we shall sit under own vine and our own fig tree, “and shall rejoice and be glad all our days.”

This prayer falls from the lips of yonder Brother, whose rough pathway for many a mile has descended into the Valley of Death. Loss after loss has he experienced, till as in Job’s case, the messengers of evil have trod upon one another’s heels. His griefs are new every morning, and his trials fresh every evening. Friends forsake him and prove to be deceitful brooks. God breaks him with a tempest. He finds no pause in the ceaseless shower of his troubles. Nevertheless, his hope is not extinguished, and his constant faith lays hold upon the promise, that, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” He understands that God will not always chide, neither does He keep His anger forever.

Therefore he watches for deliverance even as they that watch for the morning, and his most appropriate cry is, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy. Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. Show Your marvelous loving kindness in this present hour of need. O my God, make haste to help me, be a very present help in time of trouble. Fly to my relief lest I perish from the land. Awake for my rescue, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days.”

See yonder sick bed! Tread lightly, lest perchance you disturb the brief slumbers of that daughter of affliction. She has tossed to and fro days and nights without number, counting her minutes by her pains, and numbering her hours with the attacks of her agony. From that couch of suffering where many diseases have conspired to torment the frail body of this child of woe, where the soul itself has grown weary of life, and longs for the wings of a dove, methinks this prayer may well arise, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” “When will the eternal day break upon my long night? When will the shadows flee away? Sweet Sun of Glory! When will You rise with healing beneath Your wings? I shall be satisfied when I wake up in Your likeness, O Lord. Hasten that joyful hour. Give me a speedy deliverance from my bed of weakness, that I may rejoice and be glad throughout eternal days.”

I think the prayer would be equally appropriate from many a distressed conscience where conviction of sin has rolled heavily over the soul till the bones are sore vexed, and the spirit is overwhelmed. That poor heart indulges the hope that Jesus Christ will one day comfort it, and become its salvation—it has a humble hope that these wounds will not last forever but shall all be healed by Mercy’s hand. That He who looses the bands of Orion will one day deliver the prisoner out of his captivity. Oh, conscience-stricken Sinner, you may on your knees now cry out—“O satisfy me early with Your mercy! Keep me not always in this house of bondage. Let me not plunge forever in this slough of despair. Set my feet upon a rock, wash me from my iniquities. Clothe me with garments of salvation and put the new song into my mouth, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days.”

Still, it appears to me that without straining so much as one word even in the slightest degree, I may take my text this morning as the prayer of a young heart, expressing its desire for present salvation. To you, young men and maidens, shall I address myself. And may the good Spirit cause you in the days of your youth to remember your Creator, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw near when you shall say, we have no pleasure in them. I hope the angel of the Lord has said unto me, “Run, speak to that young man,” and that like the good housewife in the Proverbs, I shall have a portion also for the maidens!

I shall use the text in two ways, first, as the ground of my address to the young. And then, secondly, as a model for your address to God.  
I. WE WILL MAKE OUR TEXT THE GROUND WORK OF A SOLEMN PLEADING WITH YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TO GIVE THEIR HEARTS TO CHRIST THIS DAY.  
The voice of Wisdom reminds you in this, our text, that you are not pure in God’s sight, but NEED HIS MERCY. Early as it is with you, you must come before God on the same footing as those who seek Him at the eleventh hour. Here is nothing said about merit, nothing concerning the natural innocence of youth or the beauty of the juvenile character. You are not thus flattered and deceived. But Holy Scripture guides you aright, by dictating to you an evangelical prayer, such as God will deign to accept—“O satisfy us early with your mercy.”  
Young men, though as yet no outward crimes have stained your character, yet your salvation must be the work of reigning Grace, and that for several reasons. Your nature is at the present moment full of sin and saturated with iniquity, and therefore you are the object of God’s most righteous anger. How can He meet an heir of wrath on terms of justice? His holiness cannot endure you! What if you are made an heir of Glory? Will not this be Divine Grace and Divine Grace alone? If ever you are made meet to be a partaker with the saints in light, this must surely be Love’s own work—inasmuch as your nature, altogether apart from your actions— deserves God’s reprobation.  
It is mercy which spares you, and if the Lord is pleased to renew your heart, it will be to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Be not proud, repel not this certain Truth of God—that you are an alien, a stranger, an enemy—born in sin and shaped in iniquity! By nature you are an heir of wrath, even as others. Yield to its force, and seek that mercy which is as really needed by you as by the hoary-headed villain who rots into his grave, festering with debauchery and lust—  
*“True you are young, but there’s a stone  
Within the youngest breast.  
One-half the crimes which you have done  
Would rob you of your rest.”*  
Besides, your conscience reminds you that your outward lives have not been what they should be. How soon did we begin to sin! While we were yet little children we went astray from the womb, speaking lies.  
How rebellious we were! How we chose our own will and way, and would by no means submit ourselves to our parents! How in our riper youth we thought it sport to scatter fire-brands and carry the hot coals of sin in our bosom! We played with the serpent, charmed with its azure scales, but forgetful of its poisoned fangs. Far be it from us to boast with the Pharisee—“Lord, I thank you that I am not as others.” But rather let the youngest pray with the publican—“God be merciful to me a sinner.” A little child, but seven years of age, cried when under conviction of sin— “Can the Lord have mercy upon such a great sinner as I am, who have lived seven years without fearing and loving Him?”  
Ah, my Friends, if this babe could thus lament, what should be the repentance of those who are fifteen, or sixteen, or seventeen, or eighteen, or twenty, or who have passed the year of manhood? What shall you say, since you have lived so long, wasting your precious days—more priceless than pearls, neglecting those golden years, despising Divine things and continuing in rebellion against God? Lord, You know that young though we are, we have multitudes of sins to confess, and therefore it is mercy, mercy, mercy, which we crave at Your hands!  
Remember, beloved young Friends, that if you are saved in the morning of life, you will be wonderful instances of preventing mercy. It is great mercy which blots out sin, but who shall say that it is not equally great mercy which prevents it? To bring home yonder sheep which has long gone astray, with its wool all torn, its flesh bleeding, and its bones broken, manifests the tender care of the Good Shepherd. But, oh, to reclaim the lamb at the commencement of its straying—to put it into the fold and to keep it there and nurture it—what a million mercies are here compressed into one! The young saint may sweetly sing—  
*“I still had wandered but for You;  
Lord, it was Your own all-powerful Word,  
Sin’s fetters broke and set me free,  
Henceforth to own You as my Lord.”*  
There are depths of mercy to pluck the sere brand from out of the fire when it is black and scorched with the flame. But are there not heights of love when the young wood is planted in the courts of the Lord and made to flourish as a cedar? However soon we are saved, the glory of perfection has departed from us, but how happy is he who tarries but a few years in a state of nature. As if the fall and the rising again walked hand in hand. No soul is without spot or wrinkle, but some stains are spots the young Believer is happily delivered from. Habits of vice and continuance in crime he has not known. He never knew the drunkard’s raging thirst. The black oaths of the sailor never dirtied his mouth.  
This younger son has not been long in the far country. He comes back before he has long fed the swine. He has been black with sin in the sight of God, but in the eyes of men, and in the open vision of onlookers, the young Believer seems as if he had never gone astray. Here is great mercy—mercy for which Heaven is to be praised forever and ever. This, methinks, I may call distinguishing Grace with an emphasis. All election distinguishes, and all Divine Grace is discriminating. But that Grace which adopts the young child so early is distinguishing in the highest degree! As Hadad was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, and weaned in the king’s palace, so are some saints sanctified from the womb.  
Happy is it for any young man—an elect one out of the elect is he—if he is weaned upon the knees of piety and candled upon the lap of holiness— if he is lighted to his bed with the lamps of the sanctuary and lulled to his sleep with the name of Jesus! If I may breathe a prayer in public for my children, let them be clothed with a little ephod, like young Samuel, and nourished in the chambers of the temple, like the young prince Joash. O my dear young Friends, it is mercy, mercy in a distinguishing and peculiar degree, to be saved early—because of your fallen nature, because of sins committed, and yet more—because of sins prevented, and distinguishing favor bestowed by the Grace of God!  
2. But I have another reason for endeavoring to plead with the young this morning, hoping that the Spirit of God will plead with them. I remark that salvation, if it comes to you, must not only be mercy, but it must be mercy through the Cross. I infer that from the text, because the text desires it to be a satisfying mercy, and there is no mercy which ever can satisfy a sinner, but mercy through the Cross of Christ. There is no mercy apart from the Cross. Many say that God is merciful, and therefore, surely, He will not condemn them. But in the pangs of death and in the terrors of conscience, the uncovenanted mercy of God is no solace to the soul.  
Some proclaim a mercy which is dependant upon human effort— human goodness or merit—but no soul ever yet did or could find any lasting satisfaction in this delusion. Mercy by mere ceremonies or mercy by outward ordinances is but a mockery of human thirst. Like Tantalus, who is mocked by the receding waters, so is the ceremonialist who tries to drink where he finds all comfort flying from him. Young man, the Cross of Christ has that in it which can give you solid, satisfying comfort—if you put your trust in it. It can satisfy your judgment. What is more logical than the great doctrine of Substitution?—God is so terribly just that He will by no means spare the guilty, and that justice is wholly met by Him who stood in the place of His people!  
Here is that which will satisfy your conscience. Your conscience knows that God must punish you. It is one of those Truths which God stamped upon it when He first made you what you are. But when your soul sees Christ punished instead of you, it pillows its head right softly. There is no resting place for conscience but at the Cross. Priests may preach what they will, and philosophers may imagine what they please, but there is in the conscience of man, in its restlessness, an indication that the Cross of Christ must have come from God, because that conscience never ceases from its disquiet till it hides in the wounds of the Crucified. Never again shall conscience alarm you with dreadful thoughts of the wrath to come, if you lay hold of that mercy which is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Here, too, is satisfaction for all your fears. Do they pursue you today like a pack of hungry dogs in full pursuit of the stag? Fly to Christ and your fears have vanished! What has that man to fear for whom Jesus died? Need he alarm himself when Christ stands in his place before the Eternal Throne and pleads there for him? Here, too, is satisfaction for your hopes. He that gets Christ gets all the future wrapped up in Him. While—

*“There’s pardon for transgressions past;*

*It matters not how black their cast,”*  
There are also peace, and joy, and safety for all the years and for all the eternity to come in the same Christ Jesus who has put away your sin. Oh, I wish, young Man, I wish young Woman, that you would put your trust in Jesus now, for in Him there is an answer to this prayer—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.”

3. Furthermore, anxiously would I press this matter of a youthful faith upon you, because you have a dissatisfaction even now. Do I not speak the truth? When looking into the bright eyes of the gayest among you, I venture to say that you are not perfectly satisfied. You feel that something is lacking. My Lad, your boyish games cannot quite satisfy you. There is a something in you more noble than toys and games can gratify. Young Man, your pursuits of business furnish you with some considerable interest and amusement, but still there is an aching void—you know there is— and although pleasure promises to fill it, you have begun already to discover that you have a thirst which is not to be quenched with water, and a hunger which is not to he satisfied with bread. You know it is so.

The other evening when you were quite alone, when you were quietly thinking matters over, you felt that this present world was not enough for you. The majesty of a mysterious longing which God had put in you lifted up itself and claimed to be heard! Did it not? The other day, after the party was over at which you had so enjoyed yourself, when it was all done and everybody was gone—and you were quite quiet, did you not feel that even if you had these things every day of your life—yet you could not be content? You want, you know not what, but something you do want to fill

your heart.

We look back upon our younger days and think that they were far happier than our present state, and we sometimes fancy that we used to be satisfied then, but I believe that our thoughts imagine a great falsehood. I do from my soul confess that I never was satisfied till I came to Christ. When I was yet a child I had far more wretchedness than ever I have now. I will even add more weariness, more care, more heartache, than I know at this day. I may be singular in this confession, but I make it and know it to be the truth. Since that dear hour when my soul cast itself on Jesus, I have found solid joy and peace! But before that all those supposed gaieties of early youth, all the imagined ease and joy of boyhood were but vanity and vexation of spirit to me.

You do feel, if I know anything about you, that you are not quite satisfied now. Well, then, let me say to you again, that I would have you come to Jesus. Depend upon it, there is that in Him which can thoroughly satisfy you. What can you want more to satisfy your heart than love to Him? Our hearts all crave for an object upon which they may be set. We often surrender ourselves to an unworthy object which betrays us, or proves too narrow to accommodate our heart’s desire. But if you love Jesus you will love One who deserves your warmest affection, who will amply repay your fullest confidence, and will never betray it.

You say that not only does your heart want something, but your head. My witness is that there is in the Gospel of Christ the richest food for the brain. Before you know Christ, you read, you search, you study, and you put what you learn into a wild chaos of useless confusion. But after you have found Christ, everything else that you learn is put in its proper place. You get Christ as the central sun, and then every science and fact begins to revolve round about Him just as the planets travel in their perpetual circle around the central orb. Without Christ we are ignorant, but with Him we understand the most excellent of sciences, and all others shall fall into their proper place.

This is an age when, without a true faith in Christ, the young mind has a dreary pilgrimage before it. False guides are standing, arrayed in all sorts of garbs, ready to lead you first to doubt this book of Scripture, then to distrust the whole. Then to mistrust God and Christ—and then to doubt your own existence and to come into the dreary dream land where nothing is certain—where everything is myth and fiction. Give your heart to Christ, young Man, and He will furnish you with anchors and a good anchor-hold to your mind. And then when stormy winds of skepticism sweep across the sea, and other boats are wrecked, you shall outride the storm and shall evermore be safe.

It is a strange thing that people should be so long before they are satisfied. Look at some of my hearers today. They mean to be satisfied with money. When they were apprentices they thought they should be so satisfied when they earned journeymen’s wages. But they came to be journeymen, and then they were not satisfied till they were foremen. And then they felt they never should be satisfied till they had a concern of their own. They got a concern of their own and took a house in the city—but then they felt they could not be content till they had taken the adjoining premises.

Then they had more advertising and more work to do, and now they begin to feel that they never shall be quite easy till they have purchased a snug little villa in the country. Yes, there are some here who have the villa, and handsome grounds, and so on. But they will not be satisfied till they see all their children married. And when they have seen all their children married, they will not be at rest then. They think they will, but they will not. There is always a something yet beyond. “Man never is, but always to be blessed,” as Young puts it. There are Fortunate Isles for the mariner to reach, and failing these, there is no haven for him even in the safest port.

We know some, too, who, instead of pursuing wealth, are looking after fame. They have been honored for that clever piece of writing, but they are desirous of more honor. They must write better, still. And when they have achieved some degree of notoriety through a second attempt, they will feel that now they have a name to keep up, and so they must have that name widened, and the circle of their influence must extend. The fact is, that neither wealth, nor honor, nor anything that is of mortal birth can ever fill the insatiable, immortal soul of man. The heart of man has an everlasting hunger given to it, and if you could put worlds into its mouth it would still crave for more.

It is so thirsty that if all the rivers drained themselves into it, still, like the deep sea which is never full, the heart would yet cry out for more. Man is truly like the horseleech—he forever say, “Give! Give! Give!” And until the Cross is given to the insatiable heart, till Jesus Christ—who is the fullness of Him that fills all in all—is bestowed, the heart of man never can be full. Where shall we find a satisfied man but in the Church of Christ? And in the Church of Christ I find him, not in the pulpit merely, where success and position might satisfy, but I find him in the pew humbly receiving the Truth of God.

I find him in the pew, not among the rich, where earthly comforts might tend to make him satisfied, but among the poor, where cold and nakedness might cause him to complain. I could point you today to the workman who earns every bit of bread he eats with more sweat of his brow than you would dream of, but he is content. I could point you to the poor work-girl who scarcely earns enough to hold body and soul together—and yet in this House of God her heart often leaps for joy—for she is wholly resigned. I could show you the bedridden woman whose bones come through the skin through long lying upon a bed which friendship would gladly make soft, but which is all too hard for her weakness—and yet she is content—though a parish pittance is all that is given her to feed upon.

I say we have no need to exaggerate, or strain, or use hyperboles. We do find in the Church of Christ those who have been, and are satisfied with the mercy of God. Now, would it not be a fine thing to begin life with being satisfied? There are some who do not end it with this attainment. They hunt after satisfaction till they come to their dying beds, and then still do not find it. But oh, to begin life with being satisfied! Not to say at some future date I will be satisfied, but to be content now. Not when I have climbed to such-and-such a pinnacle I shall have enough, but to have

enough now. To begin with satisfaction before you launch upon a world of troubles! You may do so, my Brother. You may do so, my young Sister, if now with a true heart you look to Him who hangs upon yonder Cross, and commit your soul into His keeping, praying this prayer—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.”

The reason which our text gives I must comment upon for a moment. Our text says—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy. That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” We never rejoice in the true sense of the term. We never possess solid gladness till we are satisfied with God’s mercy. It is all a mockery and a pretence. The reality never comes to us till God’s mercy visits our heart. But after that, what joy we know! Tell me that the Christian is miserable! O Sir, you do not know what the Christian is! We need not appear before you with laughing faces, for our joy is deeper than yours, and needs not express itself out in immodest signs.

The poor trader puts all his goods in the window, but the rich man has rich stores even in the dark cellar—his warehouses are full and he makes no show. Still waters run deep and we are sometimes still in our joy because of the depth of our delight. Say we are not happy, Sirs! We would not change one moment of our joy for a hundred years of yours! We hear your joy, and we understand that it is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—which crackle all the louder because they burn so furiously and will so soon be gone. But ours is a steady fire.

We do mourn sometimes. We mourn oftener than we ought to do. We are free to confess this. But it is not our religion which makes us mourn. It is because we do not live up to it, for when we live up to it and have the company of Jesus, we tell you—

*“We would not change our blessed estate  
For all that earth calls good or great.  
And while our faith can keep her hold,  
We envy not the sinner’s gold.”*

Our sickbeds are often as the doorstep of Heaven. Even when we are cast down, there is a sweet solace in our sorrow, and a profound joy about our apparent grief which we would not give away. God gave it to us and the world cannot destroy it.

They who love Jesus Christ early have the best hope of enjoying the happiest days as Christians. They will have the most service and the service of God is perfect delight. Their youthful vigor will enable them to do more than those who enlist when they are old and decrepit. The joy of the Lord is our strength. And on the other hand, to use our strength for God is a fountain of joy. Young Man, if you give fifty years of service unto God, surely you shall rejoice all your days! The earlier we are converted, having the longer time to study in Christ’s college, the more profound shall be our knowledge of Him.

We shall have more time for communion, more years for fellowship. We shall have more seasons to prove the power of prayer, and more opportunities to test the fidelity of God than we should if we came late. Those who come late are blessed by being helped to learn so much, but those that come in early shall surely outstrip them. Let me be young, like John, that I may have years of loving service, and like he may have much intimate acquaintance with my Lord. Surely those who are converted early may reckon upon more joy, because they never will have to contend with and to mourn over what later converts must know.

Your bones are not broken, you can run without weariness—you have not fallen as some have done—you can walk without fainting. Often the gray-headed man who is converted at sixty or seventy finds the remembrance of his youthful sins clinging to him. When he would praise, an old lascivious song revives upon his memory. When he would mount up to Heaven, he suddenly remembers some scene in a haunt of vice which he would be glad to forget. But you, saved by Divine Grace before you thus fall into the jaw of the lion, or under the paw of the bear, will certainly have cause for rejoicing all your life.

If I may have heavenly music upon earth let me begin it now, Lord. Put not away the viol and the harp for my fingers when they tremble with age. Let me use them while yet I am young. Now, Lord, if there is a banquet, do not bring me in at the end of the feast, but let me begin to feast today! If I am to be married to Jesus, let it not be when my hair is gray, but marry me to Jesus now! What better time for joy than today? Now shall my joys swell and grow like a river, which rolls on to a mightier breadth and depth as its course is prolonged! I shall rejoice and be glad in You all my days, good Lord, if You will now begin with me, in this the morning of my days.

I cannot put my thoughts together this morning as I could desire, but I still feel an earnest longing to shoot the arrow to its mark, and therefore one or two stray thoughts before I turn to the prayer itself, and these shall be very brief. My dear young Friends, you who are of my own age, or younger still, I beseech you ask to be satisfied with God’s mercy early, for you may die early. It has been our grief this week to stand by the open grave of one who was, alas, too soon, as we thought, snatched away to Heaven. You may never number the full ripe years of manhood. We say that our years are threescore and ten, but to you they may not even be a score.

Your sun may go down while it is yet noon. God often reaps His corn green—long before the autumn comes He cuts down His sheaves. “Because I will do this, prepare to meet your God.” Then, on the other hand, if you should live—in whose service could you spend your days better than in the service of God? What more happy employment, what more blessed position than to be found, like Samuel, a waiting servant upon God while yet you need a mother’s care? Remember how early temptations beset you. Would you not wish to secure your early days? And how can you cleanse your ways except by taking heed unto them according to God’s Word?

Do you not know, too, that the Church wants you? Your young blood shall keep her veins full of vigor and make her sinews strong. Should not the love of Jesus Christ win you? If He died and shed His blood for men, does He not deserve their best service? Would you desire to give to God an offering of the end of your days? What would you have thought of the Jew who brought an old bullock—who, after having used an ox in his own fields till it was worn out, should then consecrate it to God? Let the lambs be offered. Let the firstlings of the herd be brought. Let God have the first sheaves of the harvest. Surely He deserves something better than to have

the devil’s leavings put upon His holy altar!  
“Oh, but,” you say, “would He accept me if I came to Him early?” Why,  
you have more promises than the old man has. It is written that God will  
be found of them that seek Him, but it is specially written, “They that seek  
Me early shall find Me.” You have a peculiar promise given to you. If there  
were any who could be rejected, it could not by any possibility be the  
young. If there were one whom Jesus Christ could leave, it would not be  
you, for He gathers the lambs in His bosom. “Suffer the little children to  
come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.”  
May not that cheer you, however young you are?  
Jesus Christ loves to see young men and maidens join in His praise.  
We find that the best of saints in the Old and New Testament were those  
who came to Jesus young. Certain it is that the pick and cream of the  
Church in modern times will be found among those who are early converts. Look at those who are Church officials and ministers, and in most  
cases—and the exception only proves the rule—in most cases the leaders  
in our Israel are those who, as young Hannibal was devoted by his parents to the great cause of his country, were devoted by their parents to the  
great cause of Zion and to the interests of Jerusalem.  
If you would be strong for God, eminent in His service, and joyful in His  
ways. If you would understand the heights and depths of the love of  
Christ which passes knowledge, if you would give yourselves before your  
bones are broken and before your spirit has become tinctured through  
and through with habits of iniquity—then offer this prayer—“O satisfy us  
early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” II. And now very briefly we shall take the text as YOUR ADDRESS TO  
GOD. Every word here is significant. “O.” This teaches us that the prayer  
is to be earnest. I will suppose that I have led some of you young people  
here now to breathe this prayer to God. Am I so unhappy as to suppose  
that none of you will do it? Are there not some who now say, “I will, with  
my whole heart, God the Holy Spirit helping me, now in my pew offer this  
supplication to Heaven.” It begins with an “O.” Dull prayers will never  
reach God’s Throne. What comes from our heart coldly can never get to  
God’s heart.  
Dull, dead prayers, ask God to deny them. We must pray out of our  
very souls. The soul of our prayer must be the prayer of our soul. “O satisfy us.” Young Man, the Lord is willing to open the door to those who  
knock, but you must knock hard. He is fully prepared to give to those who  
ask, but you must ask earnestly. The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.  
It is not a gentle grasp which will avail. You must wrestle with the angel.  
Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have found  
the Savior. Remember, if you do but find Him, it will well repay you  
though you shed drops of blood in the pursuit.  
If instead of tears you had given your heart’s blood, and if instead of  
sighs you were to give the shrieks of a martyr, it would well recompense  
you if you did but find Jesus—therefore be earnest. If you find Him not,  
remember, you perish, and perish with a great destruction. The wrath of  
God abides on you and Hell must be your portion. Therefore, as one that pleads for his life, so plead for mercy. Throw your whole spirit into it and let that spirit be heated to a glowing heat. Be not satisfied to stand at the foot of the Throne and say, “Let God save me if He will.” No, but put it thus, “Lord, I cannot take a denial! O satisfy me! O save me!” Such a  
prayer is sure to be accepted.  
Again, make it a generous prayer, when you are at it. “O satisfy us  
early!” I am glad to see among our young sisters in the catechumen class  
such a spirit of love for one another, so that when one is converted, she is  
sure to look round for another. The scores in that class who have found  
the Lord are always searching out some stray young woman in the street,  
or some hopeful ones attending the congregation whom they try to bring  
in, that Jesus may be glorified. The very first duty of a convert is to labor  
for the conversion of others, and surely it will not spoil your prayer, young  
Man, if when you are praying for yourself, you will put it in the plural—“O  
satisfy US.”  
Pray for your brothers and sisters. I am sure we are verily guilty in this  
thing. Those that sprang from the same loins as ourselves—would to God  
that they were all saved with the same salvation. You may, some of you,  
be happy enough to be members of a family in which all are converted. Oh  
that we could all say the same! May the remembrance of this text provoke  
you and me to pray for unconverted brothers and sisters more than we  
have ever done. “O satisfy us.” If you have brought in the eldest, Lord,  
stop not till the youngest is converted. If my brother preaches the Word, if  
my sister rejoices in Your fear, then let other sisters know and taste of

Your love. You young people in shops, in warehouses, in factories—pray  
this prayer and do not exclude even those who have begun to blaspheme—but even in their early youth pray for them—“O satisfy us with  
Your mercy.”  
See to it, dear Friends, in the next place that your prayer be thoroughly  
evangelical. “O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” The prayer of the publican is the model for us all. No matter how amiable or how excellent we  
may be, we must all come together and say, “God, be merciful to me a  
sinner.” Do not come with any hereditary godliness. Do not approach the  
Lord with the fact of your infant sprinkling. Do not come before Him to  
plead your mother’s covenant. Come as a sinner, as a black, foul, filthy  
sinner, having nothing to rely on or to trust to but the merit of God in  
Christ Jesus. And let the prayer be just such as a thief might offer, or a  
prostitute might present—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” Let the prayer be put up now at once. The text says, “O satisfy us  
early.” Why not today? Oh that it had been done years ago! But there was  
time enough, you thought. There is time enough, but there is none to  
spare. Acquaint yourself now with God, and be at peace. “Today is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.” I would to God we would not  
pray our prayers meaning to have them heard so late. Let it be—“O satisfy  
us early.” The man who truly repents always wants to have pardon on the  
spot. He feels as if he could not rise from his knees till God has been favorable to him—and mark you—when a man has really come to that point  
that he must be saved now, or else he feels that it will be too late, then has come the solemn juncture when God will say, “Be it unto you even  
as you will.”  
I must leave this poor sermon of mine with the people of God to pray  
over it. Sometimes when most I long to plead with men’s souls I find the  
brain distracted although the heart is warm. God knows, that could I  
plead with the young, I would do it even unto tears. I do feel it such a solemn thing for our country. Happy shall she be if her sons and daughters  
give their young days to God! It will be such a blessed thing for London, if  
our young men in business, and our young women in families become  
missionaries for Christ. But what a happy thing it will be for them! What  
joy shall they know! What transports shall they feel! What a blessing will  
they be to their households! What happy families they will be! Unconverted fathers shall be made to feel the power of godliness  
through their daughters. And mothers who despise religion shall not dare  
to neglect it any longer because they see it exemplified and illustrated in  
their sons. We want missionaries everywhere! This great city never can by  
any possibility become the Lord’s except by individual action. We must  
have all Christians at work, and since we cannot get the old ones to work  
as we would—since preach as we may, they will settle on their lees—we  
long for new recruits, whose ardor shall rekindle the dying enthusiasm of  
the seniors. We want to see fresh minds come in all aglow with holy fervor  
to keep the fire still blazing on the altar.  
For Jesus Christ’s sake I do implore you, you who number but few  
years—offer this supplication in your pew. Do it now. It is a Brother’s  
heart that begs the favor. It is for your own soul’s sake, that you may be  
blessed on earth, and that you may have the joys of Heaven. There is a  
prayer-hearing God. The Mercy Seat is still open. Christ still waits. May  
the Spirit of God compel you now to come before Him in supplication. Now  
may He compel you to come in, with this as your cry—“O satisfy us early  
with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

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GLADNESS FOR SADNESS  
NO. 1701

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil. Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes,  
establish the work of our hands.”  
Psalm 90:15-17.**

TO understand this Psalm, you must observe its black border. Remember the sorrows of Moses, the man of God, who saw a whole generation die in the wilderness and was, himself, denied admission to the promised land. The man, Moses, was greatly afflicted. I might almost call him, as far as his life in the wilderness was concerned, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He dug the desert till it became a cemetery, for he lived amid 40 years of funerals. This 90th Psalm is saturated with the griefs of a sentenced generation, by whom it could be truly said, “We are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.”

We have, in our own case, as a Church and people, a double black border to surround our text this morning, for death has despoiled us a second time. We were, last Wednesday, burying our honored deacon, William Higgs, and at the moment of our meeting for that solemn purpose, another greatly esteemed deacon, William Mills, (William Mills, Esq., for many years a beloved deacon of the Church in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, was taken to his rest January 12th , 1883, at the age of sixty-two), was suddenly stricken down with paralysis, to linger for a few hours and then to breathe out his soul unto God. I shall not trust myself to speak about him, for this double loss has, to a great extent, unnerved me. But this I must say, that he was an experienced and mature Christian and, above all, a quiet, diligent, loving, gracious servant of our common Master, whose care was the poor of the Church, to whom he distributed our alms with discretion and tenderness.

It was pleasant to hear from him the story of his Christian experience. His was a calm and lowly walk. Of late, being weakly, he was much at home and there the Psalms of David and the Morning and Evening Portions were his comfort. He was always a source of strength to his pastor and his Brothers and Sisters, always of great service to the Church, far more so than the mass of our people will ever know—but of late he ripened and mellowed into an unusual sweetness and spirituality. My last interview with him gave me a high idea of his thorough composure and his perfect preparedness to commune with the glorified host above. He is gone—gone happily and safely Home. He had no pain or struggle, but gradually melted into eternal life. To us who remain, one sorrow has succeeded another to keep our wound bleeding and smarting.

How well did Moses pray, “Return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent You concerning Your servants.” Oh that our God would no more put His hand into the bitter box, as Herbert calls it, but now change His dispensation and revive the spirit of His contrite ones! On our part, as we are made to sympathize with the man of God in this Psalm, so let us imitate his example. Like he in multiplied bereavements, let us be like he in Grace and faith! Observe that the first word of this painful Psalm is, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place,” as if, touched by the rod, the sufferer remembered his Father. Will the hypocrite always call upon God? No, and when God deals roughly with him, he will kick against the pricks.

But the child of God, when he is smitten, turns to the hand that smote him and cries, “Show me why You contend with me?” If foxes and wolves are prowling about, and the shepherd’s dog appears, they fly here and there as far away as they can. But when the dog is sent after the sheep, he fetches them back to the shepherd. Trouble drives away the carnal man from his pretended religion, but it gathers the true sheep together and, being awakened and alarmed, they seek the Good Shepherd. The more of grief we feel, the more of Grace we need—and the nearer to our Comforter we come! Closer to God is the cry of the troubled saint!—

*“Nearer, my God, to Thee!  
Nearer to Thee!  
Even though it be a cross  
That raises me;  
Still all my cry shall be,  
Nearer, my God, to Thee!  
Nearer to Thee!”*

Observe, also, that this Psalm is “a prayer of Moses.” The comfort of a child of God in the darkness is prayer. Adversity, blessed of the Holy Spirit, calls our attention to the promises. The promises quicken our faith. Faith betakes itself to prayer—God hears and answers our cry! This is the chain of a tried soul’s experience. Brothers and Sisters, as we suffer tribulation, as we know the promise, let us immediately exercise faith and turn in prayer to God, for surely never did a man turn to God but the Lord also turned to Him! If we are set a-praying, we may depend upon it—the Lord is set on blessing! Blessings are on the way from Heaven—their shadow falls upon us even now!

I desire, at this time, to stir you up to a joyful expectancy! These clouds mean rich, refreshing showers. These sharp frosts foretell heavy sheaves. The Lord, by the Divine Spirit, make the Words of our text to be our prayer this morning! May the Lord Jesus present our supplication to the Father. The petition seems to me to be, first, for proportionate gladness— “Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil.” And, secondly, our prayer is for peculiar gladness, a gladness which is described in the 16th and 17th verses—“Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands.”

I. First, then, beloved Friends, our prayer this morning as a Church and people should be for PROPORTIONATE GLADNESS—that our God, who has filled one scale with grief, would fill the other scale with Grace till they balance each other! Inasmuch as He has poured out of His vial, certain drops of wormwood, we pray Him to measure out the same quantity of the consolation of love, whereby our hearts shall be comforted. May our Covenant God, who has chastened us heavily, now revive us graciously!

We begin here by noticing that evidently the prayer desires a gladness of the same origin as the sadness. The Psalm plainly ascribes the sadness to the Lord—“You turn man to destruction; and say, Return, you children of men.” “We are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.” God is seen in bereavements—death comes distinctly at His command—second causes are left behind. Since we have a distinct idea that the sadness comes from God, our text expresses an equally distinct desire that the gladness may come from God. We beg for Divine comfort under Divine chastening. The words of the prayer are eminently simple and childlike—“Make us glad.”

They seem to say, “Father! You have made us sad; now make us glad! You have saddened us grievously; now therefore, O Lord, most heartily rejoice us.” The prayer as good as cries, “Lord, no one but Yourself can make us glad under such affliction, but You can bring us up from the lowest deep. The wound goes too near the heart for any human physician to heal us; but You can heal us even to the making of us glad!” The prayer is full of buoyant hope, for it does not merely say, “Comfort us; bear us up; keep our heads above water; prevent us from sinking in despair”—no, but—“Make us glad.” Reverse our state: lift us up from the depths to the heights. “Make us glad!”

I hear the music of hope drowning the discord of fear; the songs of a joyous faith rising above the mournful dirges of grief! The appeal is to only the Lord! Moses entreats Jehovah, Himself, to kindle the lamps of joy within the tabernacles of Israel. It is healthy sadness which the Lord sends and it is equally safe gladness which God gives! If we make ourselves merry, we may be mere mimics of mirth. If outward goods make us merry, we may be no better than the rich fool in the parable! But if our God makes us glad, we may take our fill of delight and fear no ill consequences! The wine of the Kingdom cheers, but never intoxicates! The bread of God strengthens, but never surfeits! Neither pride, nor worldliness, nor carelessness comes of feasting at the table of our God!

Come, then, let us together breathe this prayer—“Make us glad!” Let us paraphrase the expression, thus, “Lord, You are the Maker of all things, make us glad! By Your Word You did make the light; make light for us! You will make new these worn-out skies and much-polluted earth; come, then, and make us new and restore unto us the joy of Your salvation!” The parallel lies much in the source to which both sadness and gladness are ascribed. Lord, make both our summers and our winters, our calms and our storms, for everything is good which comes from You, and it is our joy that our times are in Your hands.

But now notice that a proportion is insisted upon—“Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil.” This is an original prayer, full of thought and hope. Truly, also, it is a philosophical prayer—one which is in accordance with the harmonies of Nature and consonant with all the ways of God. I have been told that on the Scot lakes, the depth of the lake is almost always the same as the height of the surrounding hills. And I think I have heard that the same is true of the great ocean—so that the greatest depth is probably the same as the greatest height.

Doubtless, the law of equilibrium is manifest in a thousand ways. Take an instance in the adjustment of days and nights. A long night reigns over the north of Norway—in these wintry months they do not even see the sun! But mark and admire their summers—then the day banishes the light altogether and you may read your Bible by the light of the midnight sun! Long wintry nights find compensation in a perpetual summer day! There is a balance about the conditions of the peoples of differing lands. Each country has its drawbacks and its advantages. I believe it is so with the life of God’s people—the Lord also maintains a balance in them. “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.”

The great Father permits some to be little in Israel, but they are none the less dear to Him for that! Such are like the minnow which swims a pool proportioned to its size—no great tempest sweeps over the tiny stream—its ruffles and its calms suit its little inhabitants. Another of God’s children is made for great service. He may be compared to leviathan, for whom the ocean is prepared—with billows, tempests and hurricanes in due proportion. The great Architect draws everything to scale! While some lives are wisely arranged upon a small scale, others are fashioned for wider spheres and made to do business on the great waters! These have greater tribulations, but they also have greater consolations!

God knows how to manage us all and we have, each one, a place in His thoughts. Wisdom allots each one his talent and his work—his strength and his trial. What would a sparrow do with an eagle’s wings? Given the eagle’s wings and the eagle’s eyes, there must be a soaring up above the Alps, a companionship with winds and lightning! To the tiny hummingbird God appoints no flight into the upper air, but allots it flowers and sunshine nearer the ground. He knows the way of His people and His love is over all! The good Lord measures out the dark and the light in due proportions—and the result is life sad enough to be safe, and glad enough to be desirable!

I do not believe that our mortal life is fitly set forth by the Thane’s parable, when he said to the Saxon king, “Have you marked, O king, when you are sitting in your hall and the fires are lit, and the lamps are burning, how the sparrow comes flying out of the thick darkness, passes through the window, glides into the bright and cheerful light, and then flits out again into the darkness? Such is our life—an interval of light amidst a long darkness.” It is not so! If a Believer flits out of the light, he glides into the light again! If we traverse a stretch of darkness, we may expect an equal breadth of brightness! If today we sail a stormy main, we may hop, tomorrow, that the sea will be as glass. We have our changes, but the preponderance of life is not to misery.

Rainy days are many and yet, in the long run, they are outnumbered by the seasons of fair weather. God makes us glad according to the days in which He has afflicted us and the years in which we have seen evil! It may not be said of God’s children that we are a wretched company. Though truly, if only in this life we had hope, we should be, of all men, most miserable. Yet, since that hope is sure, we are, of all men, the most happy! We shall not say, when life is ended here below, that it was an evil thing to have lived! We have the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come! “Happy are you, O Israel,” is for the present as well as for the future!

God has blessed us and we are blessed—and it is not for us to speak as if the blessing were in vain. Now, if it is so, that our gladness and our sadness are balanced, let us accept them, by turns, with gratitude! Let us notice, further, that sorrow is the herald of joy. Did I not tell you but a few Sundays ago how I sat in health and strength and joy in the olive gardens, and said to my friend—

*“Should we expect some danger near*

*When we perceive too much delight?”*  
The apprehension was soon justified, as it has often been! But let us not forget the other side of this Truth of God—we may expect some mercy, near, when we are bowed with heaviest grief! Among the ashes of sorrow we shall find live coals of joy! Grief is God’s usher of the black rod, sent to intimate that in the majesty of His Grace, the Lord is drawing near to us.

There will be first, to us, even as there was to Israel, the sound of Egypt’s chariots, the cry of her horsemen and a descent into the depths of the sea—and then shall come the far-resounding, never-forgotten shout of victory! The rage of Pharaoh, the darkness of the night and the march through the Red Sea must prepare the way for Miriam’s timbrel and the loud refrain, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea!” Israel must make bricks without straw before Moses shall come! If I had been a little child among the Israelites, I think I should have known, when father set the bitter herbs upon the table, that the lamb was roasting, somewhere, and would be set out, too. “With bitter herbs shall you eat it”—and so, if there are bitter herbs, the dainty dish is near!

Job did not know, and he could not guess it, but in the light of Job’s book we ought to know that the preparation for making a man twice as rich as he was before is to take away all that he has. Oftentimes, in building a bigger house, it is the way of wisdom to clear away the old building altogether. Keeping up the old structure is often an expensive economy—it is better to demolish it. Even so do I believe that the adversities of the saints are to their lasting profit by removing that which would bind greater prosperity. Troubles come clothed in black, but to the eyes of faith they carry silver trumpets and proclaim the approach of great mercies! God is hastening in the richness of His favor to bless His children! Sorrow is the outrider of joy!

A step further and we have it thus—sorrow often prepares for joy. It might not be safe, dear Brother, that you should enjoy worldly prosperity at the outset of life. Your adversities in business are meant to teach you the worthlessness of earthly things so that when you have them, you may not be tempted to make idols of them! I am persuaded that many men have been ruined by rising suddenly to fame and power! Had they, at first, been abused and trod down like mire in the streets, their spirits might have been hardened to endure that sharpest of all tests, namely, human honor—for, “as the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.” You are not ready yet, dear Brothers and Sisters, to bear the weight of an elevated superstructure—you must be dug out, first, and a deep foundation must be laid to bear a lofty building!

In the spiritual life, God does not run us up with glittering virtues all of a sudden, but deep prostration of spirit and thorough humiliation prepare the under-courses! And then, afterwards, stone upon stone, as with rows of jewels, we are built up to be a palace for the indwelling of God! Sorrow furnishes the house for joy. The preparation for an eternal Heaven is temporary affliction. Jesus has gone to prepare Heaven for us, but He has left His Cross behind Him that the Holy Spirit may, by its means, prepare us for Heaven! You could not enjoy the rest of Paradise if you had not first known the labors of pilgrimage! You could not understand the boundless joy of Heaven if your hearts had not been enlarged by the endurance of tribulation! Let not this be forgotten, then—our troubles build a house and spread a table for our joys.

Did you ever read of a Roman triumph? Have you ever stood upon the Via Sacra which led up to the Capitol? There, when the glad day was come, the people crowded all along the road. Every roof was loaded—the very chimney tops bore each a man, while along the sacred way the conqueror rode, drawn by white horses, amid the blast of trumpets and the thundering acclamations of myriads. What glory! What renown! Rome’s millions did their best to crown their hero. But there had been to him full many a battle before that hour of pride! Victory needs conflict as its preface. The conqueror’s scars are his truest decorations. His wounds are his best certificates of valor. Because he had been smothered with the dust and defiled with the blood of battle, the hero stood erect and all men paid him reverence.

It must be so in the present condition of things. No man can wear the garland till he has first contended for it—  
*“Surely we must fight if we would reign.  
Increase our courage, Lord!”*

The way to the crown is by the cross—the palm branch comes not to the idle hand—  
*“The path of sorrow and that path, alone,  
Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.”*Once again, let me say to you, dear Friends, there is such a connection between sorrow and joy that no saint ever has a sorrow but what it has a joy wrapped in it. It is a rough oyster, but a pearl lies within those shells if you will but look for it! Do not think I mock at grief by saying that it is the husk of joy. Far from it! I would console grief by asserting solemnly that within the black envelope of affliction there is a precious love token from God—you can be sure of that. We find the treasure of communion with Christ in the earthen vessel of sorrow. We ask to have fellowship with Jesus in His sufferings and we cannot do so unless we suffer. It is a joy to remember in our woe that by these things we are made like our Lord and conformed to His image! If there were only this comfort, it might suffice to sweeten every suffering!  
Beside this, there is generally, with sorrow, a manifestation of the Lord amid our weakness. I have known many forms of happiness, but I think, upon the whole, I consider the purest and sweetest to be that of fainting in weakness upon the breast of Jesus and dying into His life. “Oh to be nothing, nothing, only to lie at His feet!” To be as a lily broken off at the stalk and, therefore, taken up into His hands! This is unutterable happiness! The Lord’s love to His poor and afflicted ones is most choice and tender. “He carries the lambs in His bosom.” Favored feebleness to be thus laid in the Heaven of Jesus’ bosom! I love to cower down under the Divine wings like a chick under the hen, finding myself by losing myself in God! I have found it precious to feel that no more strength is left with which to suffer and, therefore, I must die away into the Divine will! Certain is it that in every tribulation there are consolations, even as every night has its own stars. I am sure, dear Brothers and Sisters, you that grieve most, today, for the departed, possess a joy which outweighs your mourning—it is a great sorrow to lose a father, but it is a greater joy to know that your father is not really lost, but translated to the skies! It is a great grief to part with a true Brother and fellow laborer, but it is happiness to know that he is promoted to the peerage of the skies! We might, each one, say of our departed friend, “Let us go, that we may die with him.” These good men have a head start on us—they are preferred before us—they have first seen the King in His beauty!  
One of them, at least, has reached his reward before his spiritual father—he who is my joy and crown is in Heaven before me! Verily, there are first that shall be last. Our hold on the invisible is strengthened by the departure of our Brothers and Sisters. We have more in Heaven to love, more fraternal meetings to anticipate and so we have new links with the eternal. Did I not say, truly, that every sorrow contains a joy? Once more, the day will come when all the sorrows of God’s sending will be looked upon as joys. Hear this! By some strange alchemy, known only to “the King eternal, immortal, invisible,” our sorrows shall be turned into joys! You see this in your own homes—I quote it because it is the Lord’s own metaphor—a woman, when she is in travail, has sorrow because her hour is come. But soon she remembers no more her travail, for joy that a man is born into the world! Our troubles and travails are sharp, but they will all be forgotten in the joy that will come of them. Before we enter Heaven we shall thank God for most of our sorrows—and when we are once in Glory we shall thank Him for all of them!  
Perhaps in Heaven, among all the things which have happened to us that will excite our wonder and delight, our furnace experience and the hammer and the file will take the lead. Sorrow will contribute rich stanzas to our everlasting Psalm. Therefore comfort one another with these words and breathe the prayer, each one, today, “Make us glad accordingly to the days in which You have afflicted us, and the years in which we have seen evil.” In each case may Divine Love weigh out the ingredients of a sanctified life according to the art of the apothecary, each one in due proportion! II. Bear with me while I come to the second part of my subject which I desire to make eminently practical. The gladness desired is also described—it is PECULIAR GLADNESS. The Psalmist wishes for a fourfold gladness—the first is gladness at the sight of God’s Work. Notice—“YOUR work.” There is always something cheering in God’s work. Have you ever felt it so? I think you must have done so. When Mungo Park was cheered by that little bit of moss which he picked up in the wilderness, he was but comforted as many of us have been. The flowers of the garden, the wild beauties of the forest, the chance tufts by the roadside are all God’s work and, therefore, breathe consolation to God’s servants.  
Nature is kind—her stars speak light to our hearts! Her winds chase away our gloom and her waves flash with health for us. Nature is a fond stepmother to the Lord’s children because she is, like ourselves, the work of the Lord. When we are in deep tribulation it is a sweet quietus to survey the handiwork of our Father in Heaven. His work in Providence, also, is often a consolation to us. Let us but see what God has done for His people and for ourselves in years past, and we are cheered! Trouble, itself, when we see it to be God’s work, has lost its terror.  
A certain Persian nobleman found himself surrounded by soldiers who sought to take him prisoner. He drew his sword and fought right valiantly—and might have escaped had not one of the company said, “The king has sent us to convey you to himself.” He sheathed his sword at once. Yes, we can contend against what we call a misfortune, but when we learn that the Lord has done it, our contest is ended, for we joy and rejoice in what the Lord does! Or, if we cannot get the length of rejoicing in it, we acquiesce to His will. This is our song—  
*“I would not contend with Your will,  
Whatever that will may decree!  
But oh, may each trial I feel  
Unite me more fondly to Thee.”*  
Brothers and Sisters, the great comfort which this Church needs, now, is to see God’s work in the midst of her revived and glorified. If the Lord will but come among us and save men. And if He will build up and edify His people and give them help to accomplish their holy service—this will be our richest possible comfort—“Let Your work appear unto Your servants.” Lord, our Brothers and Sisters fade away! They go into the shadow land and we see them no more. But, oh, if we can see Your hand at work among us, we shall not be discouraged! We mourn the loss of our Brothers’ work, but we will not be disheartened if we see Your work! May the Lord make you to see His work on your own hearts, dear Brothers and Sisters! May He make you to see His work in the congregation, in the Sunday school and everywhere throughout the world, bringing men to Himself—and you will find therein a sovereign balm for all your wounds. The next consolation is also a very rich one—gladness at the Revelation of God to our children—“And Your glory to their children.” If our God will but make His glory to be seen by our children, what more can we ask? “I have no greater joy than this, that my children walk in the Truth of God.” No better comfort can be found for bereaved mothers than to see their sons and daughters converted! There is a sorrow for those who have departed, but I could almost say, “Weep not for the dead, neither bewail them”—for there is a sharper grief, by far, and that is our anxiety for those who survive and yet are dead unto God!  
Did you ever see a chain gang of convicts marching to their labor? I could wish never to see the sad scene again. Suppose that among those convicts there was a boy of yours! Ah me! Ah me! It were better for you that he had never been born! But think of those who are prisoners in the chains of sin. Is there a boy or girl of yours in such bonds? Oh, then, I am sure you will pray the Lord to rescue you from so sharp a trial—and to set your sons and daughters free from the fetters of iniquity. Pray, each one of you, fervently, “O Lord, let Your glory as their Emancipator appear to my children and then do what You will.”

Did you ever visit a condemned cell? To peep through the gate and to see a man sitting there, condemned to die, is enough to make one faint! Suppose it were your boy! Suppose it were your husband! Suppose it were your brother! But listen—“He that believes not is condemned already.” Pardon us, dear unconverted relatives, if we say that we feel more sorrow for you living than we do for our gracious ones who are dead, for yours is a terrible plight, to be, even now, sitting in the condemned cell—doomed to be taken out to execution before long unless Infinite Mercy shall grant a free pardon.  
What dreadful sights must meet the eyes upon a battlefield! If I see a man bleeding by a common cut, my heart is in my mouth and I cannot bear the sight! But what must it be to see men dismembered, disemboweled, writhing to and fro in the last agonies of death! What horror to walk among mounds of dead bodies and stumble at each stop over a human corpse! Yet, what is natural death compared with spiritual death? What terror to dwell in the same house with relatives who are dead while they live—dead unto God! The thought is full of anguish. If God will quicken our spiritually dead. If He will give life to those who are “free among the slain, as they that go down into the Pit,” what a consolation we shall find! Did you see that alarming fire the other day? Did you hear of the hotel in flames—the one in which there were many guests in the upper story— and the flames had grasped the whole edifice, so that numbers perished? It must be dreadful to see persons at the upper windows of a burning house and to be powerless to rescue them. But if your child were there— your boy, your girl, or if your husband or your wife were there, or even if anyone you knew were there—your grief would have a double sting about it and you would cry, “Lord, do what You will with me, but save those precious lives!” Remember, then, that your ungodly friends are in the same condition, and what greater mercy can God bestow upon you than for Him to make His glory to be seen by your children in their eternal salvation? Therefore I turn your thoughts to that prayer. May you breathe it now and may the Lord, for Christ’s sake, answer it right speedily—  
*“Let your glory appear unto our children.”*The third consolation which Moses here describes is gladness at beauty bestowed—“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” Sorrow mars the countenance and clothes the body with sackcloth. But if the Lord will come to us and adorn us with His beauty, then the stains of mourning will speedily disappear! Brothers and Sisters, what a beauty is this which the Lord gives—“the beauty of the Lord our God!” This comeliness is the beauty of His Grace, for our covenant God is the God of all Grace! If the Lord makes us to know that we are His, our faces shine. If He fills us with His life and love, then brightness flashes from the eyes and there is a Grace about every movement! This “beauty” means holiness, for holiness is the beauty of God!  
If the Holy Spirit works in you the beauty of holiness, you will rise superior to your afflictions. If this Church shall be made the holier by its bereavements, we shall gain much by our losses. This beauty of the Lord must surely mean His Presence with us. As the sun beautifies all things, so does God’s Presence! When we know that Jesus is with us. When we feel that He is our Helper. When we bask in His love, when He abides with us in power—this is the beauty of the saints! If we have Christ in us, Christ with us, we can bear any amount of trouble!—  
*“I can do all things, or can bear  
All suffering if my Lord is there.”*  
This beauty gives to the Believer an attractiveness in the eyes of men. They perceive that we have been with Jesus and they behold our faces shining like the faces of angels! It is a great thing when a Christian is so happy, so holy and so heavenly that he attracts others to Christ and people seek his company because they perceive that he has been in the company of the blessed Lord! God give you this, and if you have it, dear Friends, you may forget your sorrows—they are transfigured into joy! The last comfort that Moses speaks of is gladness at our own world being established—“Establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands.” Do you notice the wonderful blending in the 15th and 17th verses? There it is, “Let Your work appear to Your servant.” Here it is, “Let our work be established.” Alas, I have heard divines rightly say that salvation is God’s work and then they have harshly added that, in our preaching of the Gospel, we make it out to be our own work. Thus they speak hard things against us and their speech is not after the Lord’s mind. Others, again, make out this work to be so much man’s work that God is forgotten!  
Neither of these is correct—we must blend the two! To build up the Church and win souls for Jesus is, first of all, God’s work and then our work! Why should a Christian work to win souls? Answer—because God works in him to win souls! Remember the verses—“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Why? “For it is God that works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” God works to set us working—our work is the result of His work! Our work is often a very effectual means of comfort to us. On the battlefield of Gettysburg there had been a terrible fight and among the wounded lay a certain chaplain of the name of Eastman who had been seriously injured in the back by his horse falling upon him. The dark and dreary night came on and, as he lay in intense pain, unable to rise, he heard a voice at a little distance cry, “O God!” His interest was excited and he rolled himself over and over through pools of blood— and among the slain—till he reached the side of the dying man. And there they lay—talking of Jesus and His free salvation! The man expired in hope! And just then two soldiers came and told Eastman that a captain was dying a little further down the field and they must carry him there— so he was borne in anguish upon the work of mercy—and while the night wore on, he spoke of Jesus to many dying men. Could he have had a surer relief from his pain? I think not! Why, it seems to me that to lie there on his back with nothing to do but moan and groan would have been horrible! But in all his pain and anguish, to be carried about to proclaim mercy to dying men made the anguish of an injured back endurable! So is it when you miss a friend, or have lost property, or are heavy in spirit—you shall find your surest comfort in serving God with all your might.  
The text prays for our work that it may succeed—“Establish the work of our hands.” Oh, if God will but prosper us in our work for Him, how happy we shall be! One day this week I had a great lift up out of deep distress when I was informed that a captain was here, last Sunday morning, and was so impressed that he found the Savior and made the fact known at one of the noonday Prayer Meetings, asking for himself that he might be kept faithful to his God. This is good. We do not always see our seed grow so quickly as that. It is wet weather just now, the damp of sorrow is on all things, and so the seed sown in tears is speedily reaped in joy! Is not this something to comfort us? Let us pray God to send us more of it, that by conversions our work may prosper.  
Then we pray that our work may be lasting—that is the chief point. I look forward to the future of this Church with prayerful, hopeful anxiety! I am not old—not very old at any rate—but I am not all that I was in my earlier days. And I mistrust whispers that soon things will decline. The other day a certain great preacher said that after a preacher had been for a while in a place, all the heroism, all the earnestness, all the fervor which characterizes new efforts would be gone. He said the best thing would be to disband the Church and let them begin, again, under a new leader. That may look like a practical idea, but I do not quite see it—nor does it commend itself, to me, as sound and true. If a Church is a man’s work, it is dependent upon a man—and when he is gone, the best thing we can do with it is to let it dissolve!  
But I desire to see built up on this spot, by God’s hand, a Church which will endure till the coming of the Lord! Though dear ones, who seemed to be pillars, are taken away, the Lord will find other pillars! And though just now there are breaches in Zion’s wall, here and there, yet the wall shall again be repaired and not a broken place shall remain! If we may see this accomplished, we shall be abundantly comforted. “Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.” We belong to an established Church—established not by men, but by the Lord! This Church will flourish when you and I have passed into our rest. Meanwhile, I beg you to take a deep interest in it and do all you can for its prosperity. Make it more and more be the model of what a Church of Christ should be. I long that the Truth of God which I have preached may be established in all the earth. They say that Calvinism is at a great discount now—perhaps it is. Yet, to me, it seems that its Free Grace spirit is far more spread than ever and is quietly saturating all true evangelical preaching. If it is so, that the Doctrines of Grace are now despised, we still hope that we shall live to see them brought to the front, again! Or, if not, we shall leave behind such a testimony that, in years to come, the Gospel of the Grace of God will be read by thousands!  
At this time I beg for the loving help of you all, for the Church itself. Our institutions deserve your zeal, liberality and prayerfulness. But do not forget the old house at home, the mother of these efforts. The Church, itself, needs your love, your prayers, your help, your sustenance! I say this to you, my dear Friends, who have been with me long—be you this day what you were at first—be as knit together and as earnest as you were when you had a boy preacher to lead you and you loved him and helped him to do good service for the Lord. For nearly 30 years God has been with us—let us begin, again, from this date and see if we cannot complete the 30 years of blessing and, if the Lord permits us, let us add another 20 years to it and make up half-a-century of prosperity!

Who knows? Only let us carefully watch the present and see that nothing declines. Let each one be eager to keep the sacred cause in a healthy condition. God will establish His work upon us from day to day—and this shall be our comfort. Keep everything in the best possible working order! Plead with the Holy Spirit to clothe us with His power. Maintain all forms of holy labor vigorously and sustain every fund by your spontaneous liberality. Never need pressing, but let each one enquire, “What can I do to keep the Church well supplied to God’s glory?” I believe this is the way to Church comfort. God will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places! But we must, each one, take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof.  
Close up your ranks! Leave no empty spaces. Let every man stand closer to his fellow—and then—“Forward!” Forward to a fuller consecration and a braver faith in God! Forward to more Grace and higher holiness! And so shall we wipe away our tears and praise the name of the Lord! And He will remember us and, by a plenitude of blessing, make up to us all that we have lost. A blessing is coming! Be ready for it! Amen.

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ESTABLISHED WORK  
NO. 3142

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 1909.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 20, 1873.

**“Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.” Psalm 90:17.**

SOME of us have been to the grave this afternoon and the most forcible impression upon our minds at this time is that of our mortality. We cannot, in burying others, say, “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” without thinking of the time when we, too, shall be laid in the silent grave. The thought that we are, yet are not, that we are but as shadows that flit across the path of life—coming, going, scarcely come before we are gone—the thought of our mortality has led us to ask concerning our work—Is that mortal, too? Will that die like ourselves? Some of us have darling objectives, high designs, great enterprises on our hearts— are all those shadows? We are as the grass of the field—are they also grass? Will the scythe that cuts us down cut them down, too? Truly, if we thought it would be so, it would give double bitterness to the remembrance of our own mortality to think that our work was mortal as well as ourselves!

Perhaps it was that feeling which led Moses, the great Prophet-poet of the wilderness, to cry, “If we die, if we pass away, yet ‘establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.’” Every good man who is doing a good work has a sincere desire that his work should continue. This is not a wrong desire—it is in the highest degree right. We wish not to build with wood, hay and stubble—which we know will be consumed—and if our work is of that kind, we must not pray for its continuance. But if we believe that we are building with gold, silver and precious stones, we may pray, for the prayer is a most proper one, and the thought that suggests the prayer is a right one, “Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.”

At the same time, let me here remark that it is the work of God which is the ground of our confidence and peace, but our own work—even that which we dare ask God to establish—can never be such a comfort and stay to us, for it is always a cause of anxiety. It is a very strange thing that unconverted men should ever look to their own works for peace and comfort, since even to Christians their own works are rather a source of anxiety than of consolation. I feel sure that every true worker for God knows that it is so. The more you do for God, the more care you have pressing upon you. And though Grace enables you to cast that care upon Him whose work it really is, yet still does care naturally arise out of all work for God to those who are truly concerned in it. Hence our works never can become the source of our truest consolation. They may become evidences to us of God’s Presence with us and may yield to our conscience a measure of peace, but still, the anxiety which will always spring out of good works will counterbalance any sort of comfort that can come from them! It is to God’s work, not our own, that we have to look— “‘Let Your work appear unto Your servants.’ We are willing to work for You, Lord, but let us always have our eyes on Your work. We shall never serve You acceptably unless our eyes are directed towards what You have done for us rather than towards what we do for You. There is no glory in our work, but ‘let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your Glory,’ which always goes with it, ‘unto their children.’ Let us see Your glorious work, Your finished work—let us see it always, let us see it living, let us see it dying, and so we, Your servants, will praise You even when our hearts are anxious, believing that You will remove our anxiety—‘Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.’”

I am going to try to answer three questions concerning our work for God. First, what part of our work can we ask God to establish? Secondly, in what way is He likely to establish it? And, thirdly, if we are praying as Moses did, what ought to be our mode of action to correspond with such a prayer?

I. First, then, WHAT KIND OF WORK CAN WE ASK GOD TO ESTABLISH? The ungodly must not pray, “Establish the work of our hands for us”—it would be blasphemy for them to do so! If the work is evil, God cannot establish it. Jesus Christ has been revealed to destroy all the works of the devil—and when He is destroying the works of the devil, He will destroy all the works that have been worked by men possessed by the spirit of evil. Nothing that has been worked unrighteously will be allowed to stand! Neither can we ask God to make it stand without supposing God to be such an one as ourselves, which He is not, and can never be. God will not help you in that which is wrong, ungodly one, however much you may try to interweave His holy name with your unrighteous actions!

And remember, too, that God will never establish our works if they are intended to rival the works of His Son. Some people work very hard in trying to make a righteousness of their own, but if they could achieve their purpose, they would then be independent of a Savior. Their attempted obedience to the Law of God is intended to be a substitute for the perfect righteousness of Christ—and their tears and repentances are intended to be a substitute for the atoning Sacrifice of Christ. But do you suppose that God will ever take the side of those who desire to rival His Son and make the work of His Son needless? That can never be! Selfrighteousness is the direst of insults to the Son of God! If I conceive myself to be righteous and meritorious in God’s sight, I do, as far as in me lies, cast a reflection upon the wisdom of God, for I tell Him that although He provided a Savior, one was not needed—at any rate, not for me! I also insult the blood of Jesus, for I tell Him that it was shed unnecessarily—at least as far as I am concerned—for I have no sin needing to be washed away! I insult the Holy Spirit, too, for I tell Him that I do not need a new birth, for I am already as good as I need to be! Selfrighteousness insults the Triune Jehovah and, therefore, we cannot ask God to establish it. If we were sensible, we should pray God to pull it down, every stick and stone of it! And rest assured, Sinners, that if God ever does save you, He will do that as one of the first things—for every stone that our fancied nobility has ever put upon its fellow with a view to building a refuge for ourselves, God will take down! Not one stone shall be left upon another if God is ever to save us. One of the most deplorable things that could ever happen to a man would be for him to be allowed to dwell comfortably in a refuge of lies until the storm of Divine Judgment should sweep both himself and his refuge away forever! Dear Hearer, may I ask whether your work is a self-righteous one, whether you are trying to save yourself? For if so, this prayer of Moses cannot properly be used by you, neither can God hear it with acceptance. No wicked works and no self-righteous works may we ask God to establish!

But may we ask God to establish the ordinary works and engagements of our daily life? Yes, assuredly we may! If you are a servant of God, you have learned to eat and drink to His Glory and your most common actions are a part of the holy priesthood to which all Believers are called. You are yourself a priest and all that you do is a part of your service for God in His holy Temple, for God’s Temple is not this Tabernacle, nor any other building. Wherever there is a true heart, there is a Temple for God—and wherever there is a renewed heart, there is a priest for God— and that is the only Temple and the only priest that God wants, with the exception of the Great High Priest, who stands for us before the Throne of the Most High. Well then, whatever you are doing, if you are doing it thus before God, you may ask Him to prosper and establish it. Why not? When Abraham’s servant went down to Padanaram to find a wife for Isaac, he did not say, This matrimonial arrangement is secular business, so I must not pray about it.” He did pray about it and God guided him and prospered his errand! And David, when he needed to know whether he should go to certain places to fight his enemies, enquired of the Lord, “Shall I go up?” And the Lord gave the answers to his petitions!

We should do well to always make little things as well as great things the objects of prayer. I am afraid that many people fail for lack of due attention to little things. It is not always the great things in which a man slips, but it is often the little things which trip him up. Great matters he naturally takes to God, being diffident of his own judgment, but little matters he decides according to what he considers his own wisdom—and his own wisdom is generally nothing but the most arrant folly! The Israelites were never so grossly deceived as when the case seemed perfectly clear to them. There were the Gibeonites with old patched shoes upon their feet, so it was evident that they must have come from a distant land. They had dry and moldy bread, so no doubt what they said was true, that they had taken it hot out of the oven when they set out on their journey and it had become moldy from the long distance that they had carried it. There was no need for the people to call the priest and seek advice from God—the case was so clear that nobody could be deceived! Their own common sense was quite sufficient to guide them—so they thought! Had it been puzzling case, they would have asked the Lord to guide them, but being so very plain, they were deceived and made a great mistake. Take care to always consult God about those very plain things as you consider them!

Still, Beloved, I would be very sorry to see this prayer limited to such matters as these. It should be used concerning them, but it must also be used to higher ends, or else it will be, to a large extent, wasted. True Christians live for God and work for God—and everyone of us who claims to be a Christian is either working for God or else an impostor. I repeat my declaration that the man who calls himself a Christian and yet does nothing for Christ is an impostor! He professes to be a fruit-bearing tree, yet he bears no fruit. He declares himself to be salt, yet he has no savor. He says that he is a light to the world, yet he never helps to remove its darkness by scattering his beams. But every genuine Christian is a worker for Christ, and work done for God is the kind of work which we may ask God to establish! And it is that work which will, in the highest sense, be established!

What great works men have performed and yet how little has been the length of their endurance! When the great city of Babylon was built, we can scarcely conceive how vast it was, but where is it now? Its site may be known, but its power is gone. Its kings have long since passed away and its glory has departed. Then there was that mighty city of Nineveh, with all the power which was connected with the Assyrians. Then there was the Persian empire! And the Persian kings with great diligence built up very powerful states—yet they were not established by God and all the might of Persia melted away. The Romans also built up a vast empire. What a great metropolis they made Rome to be! As we walk amidst its massive walls, so stupendous that they look as if they must have been the work of giants, we see how the greatest works of men without God are not established! Let them build as solidly as they may, their mightiest works pass away like the child’s sandcastles built on the beach that are washed away by the next tide! Nothing that man makes for man will endure! Build on, you despots, but Time, a mightier king than you, will pull down all that you put up! And the very revolutions of society, as men change from one phase of thought to another, overturn each other—and that which it seemed right to establish yesterday, it seems necessary to overthrow tomorrow! It is not merely empires that are thus cast down, but systems of religion and works that have apparently been done for God have gone, too! And schools of thought that ruled human minds have passed away—and now they are not—all this teaches us that only that which is really done for God—and that which is of God—will be established by God!

This leads me to say that I think the work we may pray God to establish is, first, the work of soul-winning, the work of bringing sinners to the Savior. And, next, the work of building up of a Church. And then the work of testifying to the Truth as it is in Jesus—a work which is sadly neglected in these degenerate times. The work of soul-saving—when we have earnestly labored to bring sinners to faith in Jesus and have cried to the eternal God for the quickening power of His Holy Spirit to regenerate them—we may certainly pray God that that work may be established. And then, when we have gathered Christians together and God has given us Grace to put them in their places in His Church—and the Holy Spirit has rested upon us so that the work under our hands has been God’s work as well as ours—we may certainly pray that God would build up His own Church and establish it. And when we have borne testimony to the Truth of God we may and we must very earnestly pray that that Truth may be spread still more widely, that it may not be forgotten by those who hear it, but may abide in their hearts—and that it may come to the front and influence men and women more than it has done up to now. Thus we may pray that our witness-bearing for Jesus may be established.

I do not know what particular form of service may have fallen to the lot of my dear Brothers and Sisters here, but in any case, we may pray that what we have done for God may be established—only let us remember that God will only establish work that is really and truly done for Him. We can only pray to God, in the language of this prayer, to establish “the work of our hands.” There must be real work and it must be two-handed work—we must throw our whole strength into it. I cannot expect God to establish that work over which I have trifled. If I have served God in such a way that it is palpable that I did not think the work very important, I cannot ask Him to establish it. We have a great deal of talking about the Gospel nowadays—we would have the Truth of God spread everywhere if talking would do it—but it is “the work of our hands” that is needed—real service, the putting out of our strength, the using of all our vigor, wit, wisdom and the skill of the craftsman who has been trained to some special form of handiwork. When a man throws his whole soul into what he has done for the Lord, so that he can claim that the work of his hands is real work done as unto the Lord, then he may ask God to establish it! But it must be work that is truly done, for I am afraid that there is a great deal talked about that is never done. I am not quite sure about those 30 persons who were said to have been converted the other night at a certain meeting. I cannot always rely upon the information received from a certain Brother who goes here and there and who is quite sure that so many were converted one night, and so many another night. I shall be glad if it is true, but I am not quite clear about it—there is a good deal of “flash in the pan” about his work. I read, in certain newspapers, of the work done by an earnest Brother well known to some of you—and I tried to find some trace of it, but I could not find any sign of it a few months afterwards. I am sorry to say that I have seen many churches “revived” until there has been nothing left of them. I am very dubious of a great deal that I have heard that seems to me like unholy boasting. If the work was exactly as it was said to be, there ought to have been a very great difference in certain towns from what there is now! My dear Brother, if God has done a great work by you, don’t you go and brag about it! If it is necessary for you to sometimes tell what the Lord has done in saving souls through your instrumentality, tell it very discreetly, giving God all the Glory—not by blowing the trumpet and shouting, “Come and see our zeal for the Lord of Hosts” which, I believe, brings a blight and a blast upon everything that is done. God the Holy Spirit is displeased if we make a boast of any work that is done by us—and He will not establish any work of that sort. The real bona fide “work of our hands” God will establish, but He will not establish that which we try to puff into something important by pretty paragraphs in the newspapers about what wonderful things have been performed by us! The bare truth—plain transparent facts, we may give—but anything like exaggeration should be loathed by the Christian because it is untruthful! And it should be shunned by every wise man because it leads to bitter disappointment. God will only establish work that is really and truly done for Him.

And I believe, further, that no work is ever really established by God unless it is founded upon the downright Truth of God. No doubt there is a great deal of work which God acknowledges although all in it is not His Truth. God prospered the work of Whitefield and the work of Wesley, but did that prove the truth of all that Whitefield or Wesley preached? No, but it proved that both of them had a measure of the Truth of God in their preaching—and that measure of Truth God blessed—but God would not establish anything that they taught in error. It may last for a while and some of it has lasted, I am afraid, much longer than is good for us, but sooner or later it will have to go. There was also Luther—he taught a great deal of the Truth of God and that Truth will last. But he also taught some error and the consequence is that there is a great deal today in Lutheranism which is doing much mischief! That will not last—it will have to go the way of all errors. That very point which God will destroy because it is erroneous may be that for which we contend with the greatest vigor! God will not establish any of His servants’ work which is not the Truth—and I am sure that every faithful servant of His is glad of that. What a mercy it is, if I do some mischief when I am trying to do my Master’s work, that the good work I do will last, but the bad I do, forgiven by His infinite mercy, shall by His great wisdom be swept away before long! Error shall not always remain to do mischief—it is the Truth of God that will abide. Therefore I think that we ought never to seek to do good by stating what is not true. There is a great deal of preaching of that which is not the Truth of God in the hope that it will be the means of converting people, but it is of no use. God will establish the Truth—but if we keep back any Scriptural Doctrines, or if we cut the corners off them in order to make them more acceptable to our hearers—God will not establish our work! He is the God of Truth and He will not set His seal to lies.

Hence, Beloved, it is so important that every man who works for God should always seek to work in harmony with the Spirit of Truth. We have known some whose guiding star has been “policy.” One of these has said, “Suppose I were to leave such-and-such a church which is, in part, erroneous—what would become of my work?” Dear Brother, are you going to do a wrong thing in the hope of saving your work? Have you subscribed to that wicked maxim, “Let us do evil that good my come”? After all, what have I to do with the consequences of right actions? Is it not my business, if I have learned any Truth of God, to follow it wherever it will lead me? It will not lead me into a morass, for it is God’s Light and it will only lead me into God’s way! If Heaven could only stand by a Christian telling a lie, in God’s name let it fall, for the ruin of it would be a less calamity than for a true man to turn aside to falsehood! Stand upright and then shall you be as God would have you to be. But the double-minded, the wavering, those that lean first this way and then that, with craft trimming their sails to this wind and then adjusting them to that, where will they go? And how can we expect the God of Truth ever to establish such “policy” as that? Let our work be true work done in the Truth of God and with truthful maxims to guide us, for then we may bring it before God and say, “Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.”

Do not try to build too fast, as so many do, using untempered mortar which will not hold their buildings together. Do not try to build beyond or short of the foundation lines which Christ has laid down for you. You would not employ a bricklayer who said to you, “I can get a house up much more quickly than by ordinary methods. I don’t need to use the plumb line to see whether the walls are straight or not—I do not trouble about how I put the bricks in the interior of the building. I can leave a blank here and a gap there—nobody will know it. There is no particular need why I should make the bricks fit, the one to the other—as long as I put a good facing on the front, that will do.” Such a man as that may think that he has done well, but when the master comes, he says, “All this has to be cleared away before I can do anything. You have just been doing mischief and you have wasted all the day in which you ought to have worked.” So, young man, if you go to a Church and want to see it quickly built up and begin to take unconverted people into membership, or get up a great excitement and receive a large number of persons without any careful examination, or preach what is not sound Doctrine so that big worldly people in the neighborhood come to hear you, and say, “See how fast he is building”— when the Master comes, He will point out what mischief you have been doing and He will send a better man to do the work! And that better man’s chief trouble will be to get rid of what this fast builder has put up! Let none of us build like that, but may God give us the Grace to build what He can establish, for it is not everything that He can establish consistently with His own Character of Truth and uprightness.

II. I must not devote more time to that point, but must notice, secondly, and briefly, THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD MAY ANSWER THE PRAYER, “Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands.”

Possibly, for the establishment of our work, it may be necessary for us to die. Many a man is, perhaps unconsciously, hindering his own work. And if the work is to be established, it needs somebody else to come and do it. I may again use the very homely simile of a bricklayer. If he were to say to his master, “Let me finish the house that I have built,” the answer would be, “I do not need you any longer, you have done your part of the work—other workmen must finish the building.” So, sometimes, one good man is like the bricklayer and another good man roofs in what he has built, or does all the work in the interior of the house. There is a time for all of us to die for the good of our own work and, often, the removal of an eminent Christian is not the loss to the Church of Christ that we think it must be. Perhaps you have seen a great oak tree which has covered quite a large area with its widely-spreading branches—and when it has been cut down, you have all regretted it—it seemed as if there would be a huge gap. But there were a dozen little oaks that never would have come to anything because they could not get sunshine or rain while they were overshadowed by that great oak! And when that was cut down, all those others began to grow, so that, instead of one tree, you had a dozen. And the removal of one eminent Christian has often been the means of letting sunlight in to somebody who was obscured before, but who now, in the Providence of God, is made strong and useful. So it may be beneficial for some men to die in order that their own work may be established. If it is so with us, we may well be content to go to Heaven so that our prayers may be answered!

But, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, there are some very sweet thoughts connected with working for God. When a soul is saved by our means, our work is established, for Satan himself cannot undo that work! Death may take that Believer away, but that will be the completion of the work. Now the wheat is in the heavenly garner and the precious grain is laid up where no mildew can injure it. When the work done by good men and women is the means of bringing sinners to Christ, it is sure work. That is gold taken out of the mine which never can rust. Soul-saving work is lasting work and there is this further comfort—that every soul that is truly converted by God’s Grace propagates itself. Let one sinner be brought to Jesus and he will bring another sinner. Light one candle and you may light 50 candles from it. One person may be converted to God through your kind, faithful words and earnest believing prayers—and that one person may bring another, and that one another, and that one another, and that one another, and so on in an endless chain of blessing to God’s Glory!

Remember too, that if we work for God as God wishes us to do, it is really God’s work that we are doing. He who works truthfully, according to the principles laid down in the Scriptures, has God working in him, with him and by him—and all that is God’s work will endure—you may rest assured of that! What he has done shall not be undone. Divine designs shall not be frustrated so that we may be sure that the work of our hands, in so far as it is God’s work, will be established. Besides, God is alive to take care of the work that we do for Him. We die, but He does not. We leave the work in His hands—we could not leave it in better hands! He could have done the work without us if He had pleased, but although He has been pleased to use us, for a while, He can carry on the work without us when He takes us Home. If you have sought to teach the Truth of God for Christ, who is the Truth, to bring souls to Christ and to build up a Church for Christ, God will establish your work. It is true that there are many enemies to the Truth—devils and men of devilish spirit who would, if they could, tear down every stone that you have built up— but God shall make the wrath of even these enemies to praise Him and they shall become, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, the means of establishing your work!

Meanwhile the wheels of Providence, [See Sermon #3114, Volume 54—GOD’S  
PROVIDENCE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

which are full of eyes, are grinding on in their majestic course on behalf of the work of God in which you are engaged! And all those eyes are looking onward towards the prosperity of that great cause which is so dear to your heart! Do not have any fear of failure, Beloved—if you have really worked for God, you have worked for a cause that cannot know defeat! It may not win tomorrow, or the next day, but God can wait. Age comes upon us, but nothing shall ever make Him decrepit. And through the course of ages, God can wait. I always feel, with regard to the causes in which we are engaged, when people tell us that we are in the minority, “Very well, we can be content to be in the minority at present, for the majority will be with us one day. We cannot doubt that when God is with us! Yes, and if we are alone with God, God makes majority enough for all true hearts. But even counting human heads, the Truth shall yet have the majority! God can wait—He knows how to convince gainsayers and bring them round to His side. Our little plans come to a end in a few years—we cannot afford to bring them out unless they do—but God can let His capital lie idle for thousands of years if it is necessary. He is so rich that it does not impoverish Him and He will get His interest by-andby!

God can wait and we must learn to wait, too. That work which produces no visible results at present is none the less a true work and an accepted work. If you teach the Truth and die—and that Truth appears to be forgotten, you have not lived in vain, for that Truth will spring up again in God’s good time! They burnt Jerome of Prague. They took John Huss and when they fastened him to the fatal stake, he said, “You may burn the goose, today, but there shall come a swan that you cannot burn”—and that prophecy was fulfilled in Luther, whose crest was a swan. One good man dies and another comes. If there were not brave men of Truth to go down sapping and mining, there would not be other men to come afterwards to be acclaimed victors. In any great movement that succeeds, it is not the last man who deserves the credit—it is the men who went before at whom, perhaps, everybody howled. To be able to heed the Truth when everybody tries to hiss you down and not to care for their opposition, but to feel, “I have God’s Truth and if all the devils in Hell were against me, God is with me and I am in the majority against them all,” that is the spirit to have! And when we have that spirit, we may pray, “Establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands,” and it will be done!

It is now some hundreds of years ago that certain believers in Christ were burnt to death upon the very spot on which this Tabernacle now stands. Nearly everybody agreed that they ought to be burnt to death, for they were called Anabaptists, though their belief was as nearly as possible the same as ours. Catholics and Protestants alike said, “Burn them, by all means, for this pestilent sect of Baptists is always testifying against everybody else!” And burnt they were at the Butts at Newington. Suppose they had said, out of the midst of the fire, “There will one day stand, on this very spot, a great House of Prayer wherein about six thousand Baptists shall meet at one time to hear the Gospel preached for which we are being burnt to death”? Men would have laughed them to scorn! But it has come true and if I were to say that the last trace of infant sprinkling will be swept from off the earth and that the last relic of Romanism, Episcopalianism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism and heathenism will be swept away and only be remembered by men to be loathed, I would no doubt be laughed at and disbelieved! But I would be speaking only the Truth of God. All errors will die in due time. They may live for a while and they may seem to conquer, but God will assuredly pierce them to the heart with His two-edged sword! His despised Truth must come to the front for as surely as God lives, so must His Truth live, for it is part of Himself! Be on God’s side, I pray you, for that is the winning side! Be on God’s side, old men, and also young men, I charge you, as you shall appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ—follow the Truth. Away with everything but the simple Truth revealed in the Scriptures! Put everything else aside and God will establish your work in the ages yet to come. Who knows how long those ages may be? Christ may not come tomorrow—He may wait a while but He will come one day. We are to live expecting Him to return. Yet perhaps He may tarry longer than we think— true work for Him will last until the trumpet of the Resurrection shall sound! If the work is of God, it will certainly endure.

I have no time to speak on our third point, WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO IF THIS PRAYER OF MOSES IS OUR PRAYER, but I will say just this. If we want God to establish our work, we must take care not to pull it down ourselves by inconsistent living. We must not imagine that we can establish it by any wrong methods. We must leave God to establish it in His own way—and God often establishes His Truth by that which seems likely to throw it down. If we want God to establish our work, we must pray much about it and we must do it as His work and do it for His Glory and do it according to the rules which I have tried to lay down. If I leave only this one thought with you, that the Christian is to follow the Lamb wherever He goes and to be true to the light which God has given us in this sacred Book, I shall feel that this evening has been well spent.

The Lord grant that all of us may be looking to His work for salvation and then be doing His work with both our hands and all our heart and praying God to establish it.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 142.**  
[See Sermon #2282, Volume 38—DAVID’S PRAYER IN THE CAVE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Verse 1. I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. Silent prayers are often true prayers, but there are times when, in extremity of suffering, it is very helpful to give expression to the soul’s agony. I know some friends who can never pray to their own comfort except they can hear their own voices, and I believe that it is a good thing for the most of us to retire to some private place where we cannot be heard by men and where we can therefore freely use our voices in prayer. Very often the use of the voice helps to keep the thoughts from wandering and also gives intensity to the desires. You notice that David particularly mentions here that he cried unto the Lord with his voice. No doubt many of his prayers ascended to God from his heart without the medium of his voice, but here the cry with his voice went with the desires of his heart.

2. I poured out my complaint before Him. That is a beautiful expression, “I poured out my complaint”—just as you turn a pitcher upside down and let all the contents run out! “I poured out my complaint.” We are generally ready enough to do that, only we usually go to some friend, or to some enemy and pour out our complaint into his ear. But what is the good of doing that? David took a far wiser course! “I poured out my complaint before Him.”

2. I showed before Him my trouble. Uncovered it and set it all out in order before Him. God could see it, yet David knew that it was his place and his privilege to spread it all out before Him.

3. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. Many of the Lord’s saints know the meaning of that sentence, “My spirit was overwhelmed within me.” They are like a vessel that has sunk in the sea and is completely covered by the waves. David was in such a plight as that—he did not know his own whereabouts, but here was the mercy—“Then You knew my path.” It is much better that God should know our path than that we should know it ourselves, for we may know it and be driven to despair by our knowledge. But God’s knowledge of it moves Him to uphold us in it, or to deliver us out of it.

3, 4. In the way wherein I walked have they privately laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me. “They were afraid to link themselves with me, lest, when I went down like a drowning man, they should be dragged down with me.”

4. Refuge failed me. “I could not run away—there was no place where I could find shelter.”  
4. No man cared for my soul. “They were all hard, cold, ungrateful, treacherous.”  
5. I cried unto You, O LORD. What a mercy that David was driven to do that! If there had been any earthly refuge, he would have fled to it. If there had been some human being at his right hand to help him, probably he would have trusted him. If any man had cared for his soul, perhaps he would have trusted in that person. But now that every earthly door was shut, he was obliged to turn to his God.  
5. I said, You are my refuge. “I can flee to You.”  
5. And my portion in the land of the living. With both hands he lays hold of God and cries, “You are my refuge and my portion”—two glorious “mys”! Well did Luther say that the very pith of the Gospel lies in the little words, and it is the same with the Psalms.  
6, 7. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison. This is a suitable prayer for those who have troubled consciences, for those who are shut up in Doubting Castle and cannot get out without Divine assistance. “Bring my soul out of prison.”  
7. That I may praise Your name. As soon as you are set at liberty, you ought at once to let your glad heart magnify the God who has broken your bonds and brought you out of prison!  
7. The righteous shall compass me about. This is a beautiful idea. It seems to imply that they would be so astonished to find him at liberty that they would all come round him to hear his story! They would be so glad to see the mourner rejoicing that they would all begin to enquire what God had done for his soul.  
7. For you shall deal bountifully with me. In the 13th Psalm, David said, “I will sing unto the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me.” But here he looks into the future and sings, “You shall deal bountifully with me.”

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UNDER HIS SHADOW  
NO. 3267

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT A COMMUNION SERVICE AT MENTONE,  
EARLY IN THE YEAR 1880.

**“He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”  
Psalm 91:1.**

I MUST confess of my short discourse, as the man did of the axe which fell into the stream, that it is borrowed. The outline of it is taken from one who will never complain of me, for to the great loss of the Church on earth she has left these lower choirs to sing above. Miss Havergal, last and loveliest of our modern poets, just when her tones were most mellow and her language most sublime, has been caught up to swell the music of Heaven. Her last poems are published with the title, “Under His Shadow,” and the preface gives the reason for the name. She said, “I should like the title to be ‘Under his shadow.’ I seem to see four pictures suggested by that—under the shadow of a rock in a weary plain; under the shadow of a tree; closer still, under the shadow of His wing; nearest and closest, in the shadow of His hand. Surely that hand must be the pierced hand, that may oftentimes press us sorely, and yet evermore encircling, upholding and shadowing.”

“Under His shadow,” is our winsome subject, and we will in a few words enlarge on the Scriptural plan which Miss Havergal has bequeathed to us. Our text is, “He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” The shadow of God is not the occasional resort, but the constant abiding place of the saint. Here we find not only our consolation, but our habitation—not only a loved haunt, but a home. We ought never to be out of the shadow of God. It is to dwellers, not to visitors, that the Lord promises His protection. “He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” And that shadow shall preserve him from nightly terror and ghostly ill, from the arrows of war and of pestilence, from death and from destruction. Guarded by Omnipotence, the chosen of the Lord are always safe, for as they dwell in the holy place, hard by the Mercy Seat, where the blood was sprinkled of old—the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day, which always hang over the sanctuary—also covers them. It is not written, “In the time of trouble He shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me”? What better security can we desire? As the people of God, we are always under the protection of the Most High. Wherever we go, whatever we suffer, whatever may be our difficulties, temptations, trials, or perplexities, we are always “under the shadow of the Almighty.” Over all who maintain their fellowship with God the most tender guardian care is extended. Their heavenly Father, Himself, interposes between them and their adversaries. The experience of the saints, albeit they are all under the shadow, yet differs as to the form in which that protection has been enjoyed by them—hence the value of the four figures which will now engage our attention.

I. We will begin with the first picture which Miss Havergal mentions, namely, THE ROCK sheltering the weary traveler.  
“The shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa 32:2).  
Now, I take it that this is where we begin to know our Lord’s shadow. He was at the first to us a refuge in time of trouble. Weary was the way and great was the heat. Our lips were parched and our souls were fainting—we sought for shelter and we found none, for we were in the wilderness of sin and condemnation—and who could bring us deliverance, or even hope? Then we cried unto the Lord in our trouble and He led us to the Rock of Ages, which of old was cleft for us. We saw our interposing Mediator coming between us and the fierce heat of Justice, and we hailed the blessed screen! The Lord Jesus was unto us a covering for sin and so a cover from wrath. The sense of Divine displeasure, which had beaten upon our conscience, was removed by the removal of the sin, itself, which we saw to be laid on Jesus, who in our place endured all its penalty.  
The shadow of a rock is remarkably cooling, and so was the Lord Jesus eminently comforting to us. The shadow of a rock is more

 [See Sermons

#1243, Volume 21—RIVERS OF WATER IN A DRY PLACE; #2856, Volume 49—OUR HIDING PLACE and #3031, Volume 53—LANDLORD AND TENANT—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] dense, more complete and more cool than any other shade—and so the peace which Jesus gives passes all understanding—there is none like it! No chance beam darts through the rock shade, nor can the heat penetrate as it will do in a measure through the foliage of a forest. Jesus is a complete shelter—and blessed are they who are “under His shadow.” Let them take care that they abide there and never venture forth to answer for themselves, or to brave the accusations of Satan.

As with sin, so with sorrow of every sort—the Lord is the Rock of our refuge. No sun shall smite us, nor any heat, because we are never out of Christ! The saints know where to fly and they use their privilege—

*“When troubles, like a burning sun,  
Beat heavy on their head,  
To Christ their mighty Rock they run,  
And find a pleasing shade.”*

There is, however, something of awe about this great shadow. A rock is often so high as to be terrible, and we tremble in the presence of its greatness. The idea of littleness hiding behind massive greatness is well set forth, but there is no attractive thought of fellowship, or tenderness. Even so, at the first we view the Lord Jesus as our shelter from the consuming heat of well-deserved punishment and we know little more. It is most pleasant to remember that this is only one panel of the fourfold picture. Inexpressibly dear to my soul is the deep cool rock-shade of my blessed Lord, as I stand in Him a sinner saved—yet there is more!

II. Our second picture, that of THE TREE, is to be found in the Song of Solomon 2:3—  
“As the apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.”  
Here we have not so much refuge from trouble as special rest in times of joy. The spouse is happily wandering through a forest, glancing at many trees and rejoicing in the music of the birds. One tree especially charms her—the apple with its golden fruit wins her admiration and she sits under its shadow with great delight. Such was her Beloved to her, the best among the good, the fairest of the fair, the joy of her joy, the light of her delight! Such is Jesus to the believing soul.  
The sweet influences of Christ are intended to give us a happy rest and we ought to avail ourselves of them. “I sat down under His shadow.” This was Mary’s better part, which Martha well-near missed by being cumbered. That is the good old way wherein we are to walk—the way in which we find rest unto our souls. [See Sermon #1120, Volume 19—THE APPLE TREE IN THE WOODS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Papists, whose religion is all ceremonies, or all working, or all groaning, or all feeling—they have never come to a satisfying end. We may say of their religion as of the Law, that it made nothing perfect. But under the Gospel there is something finished—and that something is the sum and substance of our salvation and, therefore, there is rest for us, and we ought to sing, “I sat down.”  
Dear Friends, is Christ to each one of us a place of sitting down? I do not mean a rest of idleness and self-content. God deliver us from that! But there is rest in a conscious grasp of Christ, a rest of contentment with Him as our All-in-All. God give us to know more of this. This shadow is also meant to yield perpetual solace, for the spouse did not merely come under it, but there she sat down as one that meant to stay. Continuance of repose and joy is purchased for us by our Lord’s perfected work. Under the shadow, she found food. She had no need to leave it to find a single necessary thing, for the Tree which shaded also yielded fruit! Nor did she need even to rise from her rest, but sitting still she feasted on the delicious fruit. You who know the Lord Jesus know also what this means.  
The spouse never wished to go beyond her Lord. She knew no higher life than that of sitting under the Well-Beloved’s shadow. She passed the cedar, oak and every other good tree, but the apple tree held her, and there she sat down. “Many there are that say, who will show us any good? But for us, O Lord, our heart is fixed, our heart is fixed, resting on You. We will go no further, for You are our dwelling place. We feel at home with You and sit down beneath Your shadow.” Some Christians cultivate reverence at the expense of childlike love—they kneel down, but they dare not sit down. Our Divine Friend and Lover wills not that it should be so! He would not have us stand on ceremony with Him, but come boldly unto Him—  
*“Let us be simple with Him, then,  
Not backward, stiff, or cold  
As though our Bethlehem could be  
What Sinai was of old.”*  
Let us use His sacred name as a common word, as a household word and run to Him as to a dear or familiar friend! Under His shadow we are to feel that we are at home and then He will make Himself at home to us by becoming food unto our souls, and giving spiritual refreshment to us while we rest. The spouse does not here (Song 2:3) say that she reached up to the tree to gather its fruit, but she sat down on the ground in intense delight—and the fruit came to her where she sat. It is wonderful how Christ will come down to souls that sit beneath His shadow! If we can but be at home with Christ, He will sweetly commune with us. Has He not said, “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart”?  
In this second form of the sacred shadow, the sense of awe gives place to that of restful delight in Christ. Have you ever figured in such a sense as the sitter beneath the grateful shade of the fruitful tree? Have you not only possessed security, but experienced delight in Christ? Have you sung—  
*“I sat down under His shadow,  
Sat down with great delight!  
His fruit was sweet unto my taste,  
And pleasant to my sight”?*  
This is as necessary an experience as it is joyful—necessary for many uses. The joy of the Lord is our strength and it is when we delight ourselves in the Lord that we have assurance of power in prayer. Here faith develops and hope grows bright, while love shines abroad all the fragrance of her sweet spices. Oh, get you to the Apple Tree and find out who is fairest among the fair! Make the Light of Heaven the delight of your heart and then be filled with heart’s ease and revel in complete contentment!  
III. The third view of the one subject is—THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS—a precious word. I think the best specimen of it, for it occurs several times, is in that blessed Psalm—Psalm 63:7—“Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.”  
Does not this set forth our Lord as our trust in hours of depression? In the Psalm now open before us, David was banished from the means of Grace to a dry and thirsty land where there was no water. What is much worse, he was in a measure away from all conscious enjoyment of God. He says, “Early will I seek You. My soul thirsts for You.” He sings of memories rather than of present communion with God. We also have come into this condition and have been unable to find any present comfort. “You have been my help,” has been the highest note we could strike. And we have been glad to reach that. At such times, the sight of God’s face has been withdrawn, but our faith has taught us to rejoice under the shadow of His wings. Light there was none—we were altogether in the shade, but it was a warm shade. We felt that God who had been near must still be near us and, therefore, we were quieted. Our God cannot change and, therefore, as He was our help, He must still be our help— our help even when He casts a shadow over us, for it must be the shadow of His own eternal wings! The metaphor is, of course, derived from the nesting of little birds under the shadow of their mother’s wings and [See Sermon #2166, Volume 36—EXPERIENCE AND ASSURANCE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] the picture is singularly touching and comforting. The little bird is not yet able to take care of itself, so it cowers down under the mother and is there happy and safe. Disturb a hen for a moment and you will see all the little creatures huddling together—and by their chirps making a kind of song. Then they push their heads into her feathers and seem happy beyond measure in their warm abode. When we are very sick and sorely depressed. When we are worried with the care of pining children and the troubles of a needy household—and the temptations of Satan—how comforting it is to run to our God like the little chicks to the hen and hide near His heart, beneath His wings! Oh, tried ones, press closely to the loving heart of your Lord! Hide yourselves entirely beneath His wings. Here awe has disappeared and rest, itself, is enhanced by the idea of loving trust! The little birds are safe in their mother’s love and we, too, are beyond measure secure and happy in the loving favor of the Lord!  
IV. The last form of the shadow is that of THE HAND. And this, it seems to me, points to power and position in service. Turn to Isaiah 49:2—  
“And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of His hand has He hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver has He hid Me.”  
This undoubtedly refers to the Savior, for the passage proceeds—“And said unto me, you are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, says the Lord that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel is not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength. And He said, It is a light thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give You for a light to the Gentiles, that You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.” Our Lord Jesus Christ was hidden away in the hand of Jehovah, to be used by Him as a polished shaft for the overthrow of His enemies and the victory of His people. Yet, inasmuch as it is declared of Christ, it is true also of all Christ’s servants, since as He is, so are we, also, in this world. And to make quite sure of it, we have the same expression used in the 16

th verse of the 51st Chapter, where, speaking of His people, He says, “I have covered you in the shadow of My hand.” Is not this an excellent minister’s text? Every one of you who will speak a word for Jesus shall have a share in it! This is where those who are workers for Christ should long to be—“in the shadow of His hand”— to achieve His eternal purpose! What are any of God’s servants without their Lord but weapons out of the warrior’s hand, having no power to do anything? We ought to be as arrows of the Lord which He shoots at His enemies! And so great is His hand of power and so little are we as His instruments, that He hides us away in the hollow of His hand, unseen until He darts us forth! As workers, we are to be hidden away in the hand of God, or to quote the other figure, “in His quiver has He hid me”—we are to be unseen till He uses us! It is impossible for us not to be known somewhat if the Lord uses us, but we may not aim at being noticed—on the contrary, if we are as much used as the very chief of the Apostles, we must truthfully add, “though I am nothing.” Our desire should be that Christ should be glorified, and that self should be concealed.  
Alas, there is a way of always showing self in what we do, and we are all too ready to fall into it. You can visit the poor in such a way that they will feel that his lordship or her ladyship has condescended to call upon poor Betsy. But there is another way of doing the same thing so that the tried child of God shall know that a beloved Brother or a dear Sister in Christ has shown a fellow feeling for her and has talked to her heart. There is a way of preaching in which a great Divine has evidently displayed this vast learning and talent—and there is another way of preaching in which a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, depending upon his Lord, has spoken in his Master’s name and left a rich unction behind. Within the hand of God is the place of acceptance and safety—and for service it is the place of power, as well as of concealment! God only works with those who are in His hand, and the more we lie hidden there, the more surely will He use us before long. May the Lord do unto us according to His Word, “I have put My words in your mouth, and I have covered you in the shadow of My hand.” In this case we shall feel all the former emotions combined—awe that the Lord should condescend to take us into His hand. Rest and delight that He should deign to use us. Trust that out of weakness we shall now be made strong. And to this will be added an absolute assurance that the great end of our being must be answered, for that which is urged onward by the Almighty hand cannot miss its mark!  
These are mere surface thoughts. The subject deserves a series of discourses. Your best course, my beloved Friends, will be to enlarge upon these hints by a long personal experience of abiding under His shadow. May God the Holy Spirit lead you into it and keep you there, for Jesus’ sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 91; 63.**

A Psalm written for comfort, but it is not addressed to all mankind, neither, I venture to say, to all Believers, but only those who are described in the first verse.

Verse 1. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. It is not every worshipper that comes there who shall be thus privileged, but those who dwell there, as Simeon and Anna dwelt in the Temple. So there are some that abide in Christ and His Words abide in them. They live near God. They receive, therefore, choicer favors than those who do but come and go. “He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High.” He who has learned to stand in the Holy of Holies, near the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat, to whom prayer is a matter of constant privilege and enjoyment—he dwells in the secret place! Such a man, living near to God, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. You know when you walk with a friend in certain positions of the sun, your friend’s shadow falls upon you, but you cannot expect to have the shadow of your friend unless you are near him. We read in the Song, “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” There must be nearness to get under the shadow! So there must be great access to God— great familiarity with Him—there must be something of the assurance of faith before we shall be able to grip such a word as that which follows in this Psalm. Read it again and if you have not attained to it, labor after it!

2. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God. In Him will I trust. Observe the sweetness of making a personal application of any passage in the Word. “I will say.” A general Doctrine gives us little consolation till we can make a particular application of it. Oh, for faithdaring, personal faith to say, “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress”! That was saying a great deal, but it was saying a great deal more when the Psalmist added, “My God.” He could not say more than that! God is a refuge and a fortress to me, but He is infinitely more than that. We cannot tell what He is. Rather, we cannot tell what He is not, but we sum it all up when we say, “My God.”And surely it is but natural to add, “In Him will I trust.” Why, who could help it? If this God is our God, and such a God—such a refuge and such a fortress to His people— surely we must trust Him! Come, if you are troubled tonight—if you have got any doubts and fears—may the Spirit of God enable you to make this the blessed resolution of your Spirit—“My God, in Him will I trust.”

3. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler. You cannot see it. You do not know it to be a snare. The bird does not suspect the fowler. “Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.” If the bird knew it was a net, it would not fly into it. You do not know your temptation, young man. No, and the oldest and most experienced Christian is not aware of the traps which the fowler is setting for him. But surely He shall deliver you if you abide near Him—so near that His shadow falls on you! If you dwell in secret with Him, surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler!

3. And from the noisome pestilence. From the noisome pestilence of error which is the worst of pestilences because it preys upon the soul. Foul air which injures the bodily frame is bad enough, but what is that foul teaching which destroys the soul—which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect? But surely if you live near to Him, He shall deliver you from the noisome pestilence.

4. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler. It is a marvelous verse! I do not think that any devout man would have been daring enough to use such language as this if he had not been led to do so by the Holy Spirit, Himself. Where the Holy Spirit leads the way, we may safely follow. But it would have been unsafe for mere poetry’s sake to talk of God’s “feathers” and “wings.” Yet see the condescension of God. He likens Himself here to the hen that broods her little ones! O child of God, nestle down closely under the warm breast of Everlasting Love, and hide yourself beneath the mighty wings of the Everlasting and Eternal God! So shall you be secure.

5. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night; nor of the arrow that flies by day.  
For if this alludes to temporal dangers—  
*“Not a single shaft shall hit,  
Till the God of Love sees fit.”*  
And if there is a covert allusion here to spiritual dangers—to the darts of the Wicked One and to the alarms which fill the soul when the Presence of God is withdrawn—if you dwell near to God you shall know no fear of these things, for neither death nor Hell can injure the man that lives in God!  
6-10. Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that waits at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. And it is very wonderful when men have lived near to God and have received special faith to grasp such a promise as this! How they have outlived the most deadly pestilences! I collected, some time ago, a little list of names of devout men who in the times of pestilence remained in the field to visit the sick and to attend to those who were dying—and it is marvelous that they outlived all—and their names stand now upon the catalog of fame as benefactors of the race. They had special faith given and they used that faith in trusting in God! I have already said that I do not believe that this applies to all Believers, for good men die as well as bad men in days of pestilence, but there are some who dwell near to God to whom the promise comes with special power—and they have been able to do and dare for God without fear—and their faith has been abundantly rewarded.  
11, 12. For He shall give His angel charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hand, lest you dash your foot against a stone. They get special commandment to take care of the saints of God—the angels—those unseen but swift and mighty messengers of Heaven! When David had the troops paraded before him, when they were going out to fight Absalom, he gave them all a charge that they should not touch the young man, Absalom, and yet, you know, he died. But God’s angels keep His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word and go when He gives them a charge of what to do! He says, “O you angels, this day watch over My people. Keep them in all their ways. Be to them as a nurse who bears up her child in her hands, and if they are likely to meet with even some minor trial, lest they should skip and sin, bear them up lest they dash their foot against a stone.” Now comes a glorious promise.

13. You shall tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon you shall trample under feet. God often gives victories like these to His people so that Satan and all the powers of evil are trampled down by the holy child-like confidence of the man who is resolved to serve his God!  
14. Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he has known My name. He has no merits. He does not claim any. But he loves Me and, therefore, I love him and I will deliver him because he loves Me. Oh, love the Lord, all you saints! Love Him more and more, for this love of yours shall bring to you a sweet reward!  
15. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. Were there ever words fuller of consolation than these? “He shall call upon Me.” Divine Grace will take care to give us the spirit of prayer. “And I will answer him.” Divine Grace will give the answer!  
15, 16. I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him My salvation. Now, it is not a promise to every good man that he shall live for a long period, for some among the best of men die in very early youth. But still they have had a full life, for life must not be measured by years. Oh, how much do some men pack into a little time! How much of life there may be in the man whose course is finished before he is 30 years of age and how little may some live who expand their days into 80 or 90 years! Belzoni’s toad—you remember the piece of poetry into which some imaginative person has cast his diary, how once in a thousand years it crept from under a stone and winked with one eye? Well it did not live much in the course of two or three thousand years—it existed. But a man who is full of holy duties and earnest purposes lives long even though the time is short!  
*Psalm 63.*A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah—  
Exiled, ill at ease, hunted, exposed to danger. Yet he could sing! And some of the sweetest Psalms came out of the bitterest afflictions. God’s songsters are like nightingales that reserve their sweetest music for the night. Whenever you and I come to be in the wilderness, may we refresh ourselves with such a Psalm as this.  
Verse 1. O God, You are my God. Everything else has gone, but You are my God. There are gods of the heathen, but You, the true and real Jehovah, are my God. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to take a firm grip of God after this fashion, “O God, You are my God.”  
1. Early will I seek You. “Oh,” says one, “why did he seek God if God was his?” Would you have him seek another man’s God, then? No, it is because He is ours that we seek Him and desire His company. If you know God to be your God, you will not be satisfied unless you are living near Him. “Early will I seek You.” I will not wait. I cannot wait. I cannot tarry. I must not tarry. Early will I seek You.  
1. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where is no water. Thirst is one of the strongest longings of our nature. You can appease hunger for a while, but thirst is awful. There is no staying that. When it is once upon a man, he must have water or die. “My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where is no water.” No means of Grace. Nothing to help me. No Believers round about me. I am left alone thirsting for my God. And yet it is so precious a thing, so sure a mark of Grace to thirst for God anywhere, that one may be thankful even to be in a dry and thirsty land if one possesses a true thirst after God!  
2. To see Your power and Your Glory, so as I have seen You in the sanctuary. He had seen God in His holy place, and he longs to see Him again. They that never knew God do not want to know Him. But they that have known Him desire to know Him more and more! If you do not long for the Bread of Heaven, it is because you never tasted it. He that has once tasted it will sigh and hunger till he is satisfied with it.  
3. Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. “Better than life.” And surely life is better than anything else. “Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.” Life is better than meat. Life is better than riches! And if the loving kindness of God is better than life, then we have a very high price set upon it, but none too high a price. Oh, that you and I may know how sweet, how precious is the loving kindness of God—and then we shall say that it is better than life! And because it is so, my lips shall praise You. Not only my heart, but I will do it openly. I used to speak vanity when I served vanity. Shall I not now speak out for God when I have come to serve Him? My lips shall praise You!  
4. Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in Your name. I will confess You. I will rejoice in You. I will work for You. I will encourage myself in You. I will lift up my hands in Your name. Are any of you cast down? Do your hands hang down? Then lift them up in God’s name! Nothing else can make you strong. The name of the Lord shall be your strength.  
5, 6. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips: when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches. God’s people know what perfect satisfaction means. When God reveals His love to them and Christ draws near in the fullness of His Grace, then they would not change places with all the kings of the earth! Not all the richest dainties that were ever served up at royal banquets are equal to the love of God. My soul, not my body, but my inmost self, my very life, shall be satisfied even as with marrow and with fatness. The oriental’s idea of luxury is to eat fat. They will eat what we cannot endure, but we, dear Friends, understand the metaphor and appreciate what is meant by David. God will satisfy us with the best of the best, with marrow and fatness. He will make that satisfaction double as with marrow and fatness—and we shall be so satisfied that we shall have nothing left to do but to praise. “My mouth shall praise.” Says our poet—  
*“All that remains for me,  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come  
To bear me to their King.”*  
He that wrote that verse knew what was meant by this, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.’’  
7. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice. That is God’s logic. One likes to see “therefores” in Scripture. They are inferences drawn with great accuracy. You have been my helper. Well, then, You will be my helper and if I cannot see Your face, I will rejoice in the shadow of your wings! I know that You are there even if I cannot see You. And if I only know that You are there by the shade that You cast over me—that calming, cooling shade which dampens the ardor of my worldly spirit—if this is all that I get from You, yet in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice!  
8. My soul follows hard after You. I am after You, my God, hard after You, following hard after You, longing for You, like a dog at the heels of his master’s horse, going with all his might, following hard after You. Oh, this is a healthy condition to be in! If you cannot yet reach your God, yet if you follow hard after Him, it is well with you, for notice the next sentence—  
8. Your right hand upholds me. No man follows after God unless God helps him to do so. It comes of the Grace of God! When you are seeking God, it is because God is seeking you—and though you know it not, there is a vast amount of Divine Grace couched in this desire.  
9, 10. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. Or jackals, as its name became.  
11. But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone that swears by Him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. Very hard work to stop it, though, for they are always breaking out in a fresh place. They have always some new lie! A shovelful of earth will do it, if nothing else will. Let everyone here who is accustomed to slander or to speak evil of his neighbor listen to this prophetic voice—“the month of them that speak lies shall be stopped.” But the mouths that speak the praises of God shall go on singing forever and ever. May such mouths be ours!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2969 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ANGELIC PROTECTION IN APPOINTED WAYS

NO. 2969

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 22, 1875.

**“For He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways.” Psalm 91:11.**

OUR subject this morning was the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb upon the lintel and the two door-posts of the houses of the children of Israel and Egypt. As soon as that was done and the lamb had been eaten, they had to start upon their journey to Canaan. They knew that they had to go and they were prepared to go. They had their loins girt and each man had his staff in his hand and his sandals on his feet. After being prisoners so long, they were set free in order that they might become pilgrims to the land which the Lord their God had given to their fathers.

We who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, are in a similar condition to theirs, for the Lord has redeemed us and we can sing the new song, “He has brought us up out of the house of bondage and with a high hand and an outstretched arm He has made us free.” And now we are pilgrims and strangers in this world, for we are on our way to a better land than the earthly Canaan ever was—a land that flows with something richer than milk and honey and where there is an eternal and abounding portion appointed for each one of the redeemed! We are pressing on, through this great wilderness, towards the land into which the Lord will surely bring us in His own good time. Our text is a promise to pilgrims. It most appropriately follows the text of this morning—“The blood shall be to you for a token.” You have set out upon the road to Heaven. You have entered the narrow way by Christ, who is the Gate at the head of the way, and now you are wondering how you will get on while you are on the road, and whether you will be proved in the right way so as to endure unto the end. This promise comes to you with much of real heart-cheer—“He shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”

I. My first remark is rather by way of implication from the text than in direct exposition of it. It is this—THERE ARE SOME WAYS WHICH ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PROMISE because they are not our ways and they are not God’s ways. They are ways into which we may be tempted by Satan—and which we are to jealously avoid.

You know how, when the devil professed to quote this text to our Lord, he left out the latter part of it, “to keep you in all your ways,” because it would not have suited his purpose to mention that proviso. We, however, will begin with the words which the devil omitted since the very fact of his omission of them seems to show how essential they are to a right understanding of the meaning of the text! O Christian, if you keep to the King’s Highway, you will be safe! But there are byways and, alas, crooked lanes which you must not go down. If you do go there, you will go at your own risk. He who travels on the King’s Highway is under the King’s protection—but he who takes to byroads must protect himself—and the probability is that he will meet with robbers who will make him rue the day that he ever turned to the right hand or to the left!

So first we must take care that we never go in the ways of presumption. This is what Satan would have had Christ do. “Cast Yourself down,” he said, “for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You.” This temptation to presumption is by no means an uncommon one. I have heard of it from the lips of men who were evidently not the children of God, or they would have resisted the temptation and not have yielded to it as they did. They have said, “Well, we are God’s children, so we may do as we like. We are saved, therefore we may live as we please”—a dreadful inference from what, to other men, might be a precious Truth of God. O dear Friends, beware of tempting the devil to tempt you! Beware, too, of tempting the Lord, your God, as some do who venture a long way into evil company, or into doubtful paths under the mistaken notion that they are so prudent that they will not be overtaken as others might be—that they are so sage and withal so experienced that they may go where young people must not venture, and may do a great many things which less-instructed Christians had better not do. Where you think you are perfectly safe, there you are often most in danger! Horses frequently fall just at the bottom of the hill, when the driver thinks that it is unnecessary to rein them up any longer. When you are so foolish as to say, “Now I am out of the reach of temptation,” you are in the very midst of temptation! And when you think you are not being tempted at all, you are being tempted the most by the very fancy that you are not being tempted!

O beloved Friends, beware of presuming! Some have been so favored in the dispensations of Providence, so prosperous in everything they have undertaken, that they have thought they might speculate as far as ever they pleased and, at last—well, they’ve had very shady characters at the end of their lives. They have done once what they never ought to have done and, because it succeeded, they have been tempted to do it again and yet again. But, I pray you, Sirs, never gather from the success of a wrong action, that God is willing for you to repeat it! Rather say, “God was very gracious to me in not punishing me that time, but I will never run such a risk as that again.” I do not believe that Jonah, after having been once thrown into the sea and been cast forth upon the shore by the whale, ever wanted to be flung into the sea again. He might not have felt certain about another whale coming along to carry him to land! If you have been miraculously delivered once from the great deep, do not put yourself into such a position again. If you do, you may find that the next great fish is a shark—not a whale—and, instead of being brought to land, you may be destroyed. In brief, beware of all presumptuous ways, for God has not promised to keep you there.

And, Brothers and Sisters, you scarcely need to be told that you cannot expect to be preserved if you go into sinful ways. I trust that you watch against the more coarse and vulgar sins to which others are prone and that you will not be allowed to fall into them, but there is such a thing as falling little by little. Mind, I pray you, the little evils. A man never falls into the great, unclean sins of lust all at once—it is usually by a long series of little familiarities that he reaches that terrible end. He is indecorous first, indecent next and then, at last, criminal! Oh, keep back, keep back from the beginnings of evil! If you keep back at the very first, you will go no further. But if you slide just a little, you will find that this world is such a slippery place that you will surely fall, and fall frightfully, too. I trust that no Christian would practice dishonesty in his business, yet you know that it is very easy for one to do a wrong thing because it is “the custom of the trade.” “They label this 100 yards, though it is only 90—but if I label it so, I will not sell it and in the next shop it will probably be marked 110—so I must label mine a little more than it is.”

Well, if you do, remember that you are a thief! Though it is the custom of the trade, you are a liar if you conform to it and you cannot expect God’s blessing upon you in doing it! Do you think that in the Day of Judgment, God will say to men, “You are not guilty, for that deception was the custom of the trade”? By no means! What does the Lord care about the customs of your trade? Do right, at all costs. If you do wrong, you do it at your peril, for you have no promise from God that He will keep you in such a way as that. I need not enlarge upon this point because you know as much about such things as I do and, therefore, you can make the application to your own particular case. But, O Christian, do keep altogether clear of every evil way! May God’s Grace preserve you from straying into Bypath Meadow!

The man who professes to be a Christian must not expect God’s angels to keep him if he goes in the way of worldliness. There are hundreds, and I fear thousands, of church members who say that they are the people of God, yet they appear to live entirely to this world. The great aim is moneymaking and personal aggrandizement—just as much as it is the aim of altogether ungodly men. The Kingdom of Christ, the needs of His Church, the needs of perishing souls, have a very slender place in their hearts—they live wholly for themselves—only they try to conceal it under the plea of providing for their families. “Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,” is a text from which we need to preach to professing Christians throughout London, and throughout the whole world.

There is also the way of pride which many tread. They must be “respectable.” They must move in “Society”—with a big “S”—and everything is ordered with a view to display. To be great, to be famous, to be esteemed, to keep up a high repute—it is for this that they live! And some grow very strong, in a Christian sort of way, in that line. They profess to have attained to a “higher life” than ordinary Christians ever reach. I am not at all anxious to get up there, for I do not believe there is any higher life in this world than the life of God which is given to everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ! The highest life I aspire to is to live as Jesus Christ lived and to walk as He walked—and that is the lowest kind of life with which any Christian ought to be contented! When we get such fine feathers as these, they do not make us fine birds.

There is also the way of willfulness which I have known some follow. Very grievous is it to see some whom we really think to be good men, shift their quarters apparently without any reason. They were doing very well, yet away they rush, for they cannot let well enough alone. Some Brothers seem to be afflicted with a kind of perpetual fidgetiness. They are rolling stones and gather no moss. They move from one position to another, not because there is any need for them to move, but just because they cannot stay still! They go away from their nest and away from their home—and very often act in direct opposition to the order of God’s Providence! Oh, beware of that spirit of willfulness! We may get to be so very strong-headed that we may have to suffer there! It is often wise, as the old saying puts it, to take advice of our pillow. He who does not sleep upon a thing may have to weep upon it. Better look before you leap. Always follow the cloud of God’s Providence—don’t run before it, for if you run before it, you may find it hard work to get back again. Many have acted thus to their cost and, of course, have had no blessing resting upon them in doing so.

One other way in which a Christian ought not to go is the way of erroneous doctrine. I know some professors who, as soon as a new heresy comes up, want to have taste of it. I confess that I never felt much temptation in that direction. I do not suppose if you went into a chemist’s shop, you would say to him, “I have heard of somebody being killed at Norwood by taking such-and-such a poison—I would like a taste of it.” You would not ask him to take down his big bottles and to give you a taste of all the deadly poisons he had in stock. “Oh, no!” You say, “we are in our right senses. We would not do such a foolish thing as that.” Yet I know people who as soon as ever there is any teaching spoken of as being erroneous, say, “We must have a look at that. We must have a taste of that”—never satisfied except when they are tasting poison! There is a period in life when a Christian man should obey Paul’s injunction to the Thessalonians, “Prove all things”—but let him get that done as quickly as he can and then let him get to the second part of the injunction—“Hold fast that which is good.” Never hold anything fast till you have proved it to be good—but do not be everlastingly proving it! Some things do not need

 any proving—they bear upon their forefront their character. But others need to be proved, so, having proved the right things to be right, and the true things to be true, hold them fast and turn not aside from them!

About every six weeks there is a new doctrine promulgated. Sometimes there is a new sect started. It is simply because there is somebody away up there in his study who is sorely troubled with bile or dyspepsia. He never went out to try to win a soul. He never did any practical work for Christ. But he edits a newspaper, or he writes for a magazine—and out of that wonderful brain of his, which is full of cobwebs, he excogitates a new doctrine! And as there are certain people who are always waiting for such novelties, straightway they run off with it and spread it wherever they can. These false-doctrine makers and their disciples are the curse of the age in which we live! I implore you, my Friend, to abide in the good old paths! What you know to be true, that hold fast! Forsake not your father’s God and your mother’s God. As for the Truths of God which God has taught you by His own Spirit, grapple them to you as with hooks of steel, for, if you go in the way of error, you cannot expect Divine protection!

II. Now, secondly, THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH SAFETY IS GUARANTEED. I shall only have time to mention them very briefly.  
There is, first, the way of humble faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You know that way, Brothers and Sisters, so walk in it. Oh, to be nothing and to let Christ be everything—to confess our own guilt and to be clothed in His righteousness! Keep to that safe road, for it is the King’s Highway of which it may be said, “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.”  
There is, next, the way of obedience to Divine precepts. Do what God tells you, as God tells you and because God tells you, and no hurt can come to you. The Lord told Moses to take by the tail the serpent from which he fled. He did so and he was not bitten, but the serpent stiffened into a wonder-working rod! Obey the Lord in all things. Mind the jots and the tittles, for whoever will break one of the least of Christ’s commandments “and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.” Oh, to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, step by step, and to keep closely to His footprints! It is in such ways that angelic protection will be afforded to us.  
There is, also, the way of childlike trust in Providential guidance. Happy is that man who always waits upon God to know what he shall do—who asks the Lord to always guide him and who dares not lean upon his own understanding. Watch the Lord’s Providential leadings. Wait for Divine guidance. It is far better to stand still than to run in the wrong road. Pause a while and pray for direction—and do not move until you hear the voice behind you saying, “This is the way; walk you in it.” In such a road as that, angels will certainly guard you!  
There is, too, the way of strict principle and stern integrity. Travelling along that road will often involve a good many losses and crosses, much reproach and, sometimes it will even appear to destroy your usefulness. But I charge you—young men especially—never violate any principle which you profess to hold! I believe that it has been a lasting blessing to some whom I know, that they have scorned to trim their sails, even in the smallest degree, to please any living soul. Do the same. “Be just and fear not.” Keep to a cause that is despised if you believe it is a right one and love it all the more because it is despised! Ask not what it will pay. Care not for the flatterer’s smile. Pursue Truth even though she may go along very rough roads—she will always repay you in the long run. Cling to her and win her smile—then the frowns of the whole world need not cause you a moment’s thought! The way of principle is the way of safety. God’s angels will keep you if you keep to that road.  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, I am quite sure that the way of consecrated service for God’s Glory is another of these safe ways. It is well when a man says, “I choose my path by this rule—how can I best serve my God? Having judged whether them is any principle involved and having a fair choice between this and that, I say to myself, ‘In which way can I hope to be the more useful? In what course of life can I best glorify God?’” That is your way to Heaven, Christian—the way in which your Master can get the most glory out of you! And if you walk in that way, you may depend upon it that you will be protected by His Sovereign Power!  
And once again, there is the way of separation from the world and close walking with God. No man ever suffered any real injury through keeping himself aloof from the ways of ungodly men and, on the other hand, no man ever failed to be a gainer by close and intimate fellowship with God. “Enoch walked with God” and he gained not only escape from the pangs of death, but also the testimony that “he pleased God.” O Christian, could not more of us choose this blessed path and walk in it continually? If we did so, we “would have the fulfillment, in its deepest meaning, of the promise of our text, “He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”  
III. But I must pass on to note briefly, in the third place, that THESE RIGHT WAYS WILL LEAD US INTO DIFFERING CIRCUMSTANCES.  
Sometimes the right way will lead us into very stony places, positions of great difficulty—yet here is the promise to meet that emergency, “They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” A way is none the less right because it is rough. Indeed, often it is all the more sure to be the right way because it is so displeasing to flesh and blood.  
Sometimes, also, the right way may be very terrible with temptation. If your path is so beset, do not, therefore, imagine that it is a wrong way, because the Psalmist goes on to say, “You shall tread upon the lion and adder.” Lions and adders will come to you—temptations will threaten to devour you even while you are in the right road—but then, you are promised that as long as it is the right road that you are in, you shall get the victory over the lion and the adder. The temptation may be of so mysterious a character that you cannot understand it. It may be like a dragon, but, if so, here is your comfort, “the young lion and the dragon shall you trample underfoot.”  
And remember, beloved Friends, that even if the road is not stony and if no lion attacks you, you will be kept from the perils of the smooth and easy roads. You will always need Divine and angelic keeping, for God would not have charged His angels to keep His people in all their ways if they did not need protection in all their ways! Some of you are just now prospering in business, but your way is not any safer than the way of the man who is losing his all. Indeed, yours may not be as safe as his! To you who are in robust health, I venture to say that your path is more perilous than the path of the man who is always ailing. And to all of you I say, pray for angelic keeping. Ask the Lord to guard you with His celestial hosts, or else, in any of your ways, be they rough or smooth, you will fall to your serious hurt.  
IV. Now we come to the fourth point which is this—WHILE WALKING IN ALL RIGHT WAYS, BELIEVERS ARE SECURE. “He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”  
O Christian, if you have not violated your conscience. If you have not forsaken the path of communion with your God, think what high privileges are yours! First, God Himself concerns Himself about you. He charges His angels to take care of you. David, when his soldiers went to battle against his rebellious son, Absalom, specially charged their leaders to deal gently with the young man, Absalom, for his sake. But he charged them in vain. In a far higher sense God charges His angels to guard His saints—but He does not charge them in vain! This is not a mere general command. It is a sort of imperative personal charge that God lays upon His angels—“Take care of My children. They are on My road—the King’s high road of rectitude. Watch over them and do not allow them to be hurt.” So you have God personally charging His angels to take care of you!  
Next, you have mysterious agencies to protect you. “He shall give His angels charge over you.” We speak of dragons, but we do not know much about them. And we do not know much about angels, but we feel sure that angels can overcome dragons, for they are more than a match for devils! And if mysterious temptations come to you, there shall also be mysterious defenders to thrust them back. You have more friends, poor Christian, than you know of. When you are fighting the battles of God, you may hear a rush of angels’ wings at your side if you only have your ears Divinely opened. If all men forsake you, God can send His angels, though you see them not, to strengthen you in some secret manner that I cannot fully explain. “Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha,” the Prophet who dared to be true to his God and to serve Him faithfully. God would sooner empty Heaven of all the angelic host, cherubim and seraphim included, than allow any one of His people who has walked in His ways, to suffer defeat. He charges all His angels to take care of His saints and to keep them in all right ways.  
And as angels are on our side, so are all things, visible and invisible. Why Believers, the very stones of the field are in league with you and the beasts of the field are at peace with you! Wherever you go, you have friends ready to help you. It is true that you have enemies among the wicked, but their weapons shall not prevail against you. And wherever there is a messenger of God—be it wind, or storm, or lightning, or hail—it is your friend! The very stars in their courses fight for you! The forces, terrific and tremendous, which at times shake the world, are only your Father’s flaming swords unsheathed to protect you! If we are walking in the ways of God, we can truthfully sing—

*“The God that rules on high,  
And thunders when He pleases,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas—  
This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love!  
He shall send down His heavenly powers  
To carry us above.”*  
Sing then, you saints of the Lord, for everything is on your side! “You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”  
What a very sweet thought is suggested by the word, “you,” in our text! It teaches us that each one of the saints is personally protected. “He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.” God takes a personal interest in every traveler along the right road and charges His angels to keep them. Perhaps you say, “I do not read the text, Sir, as referring to me.” Well, I think you should. When you read the precept, “You shall not steal,” do you suppose that it refers to you? “Oh, yes!” you say, “I would not like to suggest that it did not mean me. I would not plead exemption from the precept.” Well, then, my dear Brother, do not seek to be exempted from the promise! Just as you feel sure that the precept applies to you, so, as a child of God, feel sure that the promise applies to you—“He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”  
This protection is perpetual as well as personal. God’s angels are “to keep you in all your ways”—in your ups and your downs, in your advancement and your retiring—to keep you when you are asleep and when you are awake—to keep you when you are alone and when you are in company—to keep you if you have to preach and to keep you if you have to hear—to keep you if you have to serve and to keep you if you have to suffer. You always need keeping and you shall always have it, for the angels are charged “to keep you in all your ways”!  
And how beautiful it is to remember that all this keeping brings honor with it. “He shall give His angels charge over you.” Notice that—“He shall give His angels”—the very angels that wait upon God and see His face! The very angels that are the bodyguard of the Eternal! “He shall give His angels charge over you,” “Mark you,” says the Lord to Gabriel, or Michael, or whatever the angel’s name may be, “I charge you to take special care of that poor girl, for she is a daughter of Mine. Take care of that poor man whom so many despise, for he is a prince of the blood imperial. He belongs to Me—he is an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ.” Oh, what amazing dignity this promise puts upon the very least and lowliest of the followers of the Lamb!  
Note just one more point, that all these privileges come to us by Jesus Christ, for Christ is that mystic Ladder which Jacob saw, up-and-down whose wondrous rungs the angels came and went! The commerce between the saints and Heaven is kept up by way of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what joy is this! If Christ is yours, angels are yours, and all the principalities and powers in the heavenly places will delight to take care of you!  
Now, if anyone here is going home to a lonely room, I should like you to feel that you are not going there alone. Father and mother are away in the country, perhaps, and some of you young people feel quite alone in London. But, if you are believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are not alone, for the Lord of all the holy angels is with you and an innumerable company of blessed spirits is round about you. Take comfort from this glorious Truth of God! God’s mysterious angelic agency, which you see not and hear not, but which is most true and real, will form a cordon round you to protect you in the midst of the temptations of this great city! And if you are but faithful to Him and keep in His ways, nothing shall hurt you between here and Heaven! There may be many darts hurled at you, but the great shield of faith shall turn them all aside or quench them forever. You will have to encounter many temptations and trials, but you will be preserved amid them all. I heard a Primitive Methodist minister speaking last Friday night, make use of a very strong expression while describing what a man could do by faith. He said, “He can not only overcome a legion of devils, but he could kick his way through a lane of devils if he did but rest in God.” I have had that idea in my mind ever since I heard him use that expression—and I am sure that it is true, for some of us have already had to do it. Those devils are great cowards. So when God once takes entire possession of a man, he need not fear even though all Hell were let loose upon him! One butcher is not afraid of a thousand sheep! And one man whom God makes strong, can put to route all the hosts of Hell—and he need not fear all the trials of life whatever they may be! “If God is for us, who can be against us?”  
In closing, there are two or three thoughts which I think are worth remembering. The first is this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we see, from this text, that the lowest employment is consistent with the highest enjoyment. The angels are our nurses—“they shall bear you up in their hands,” just as nurses hold up little children who are not able to stand by themselves. Those angels continually behold God’s face and live in the perfect bliss of Heaven, yet they condescend to do such humble deeds as these. Dear Brother, be like the angels in this respect—teach an infant class in the Sunday school, yet keep your face bright with the Light of God’s Countenance. Give away tracts, go and visit among the poor, look after fallen women, or do any other work for the Lord that needs to be done. Never mind what it is, but remember that the employment is all the more honorable because it appears to be so commonplace. Never was Christ grander, I think, than when He washed His disciples’ feet. Certainly, never are we more like He than when we, also, are willing to wash their feet, or render any lowly service that they may need.  
The next thought is as angels watch over us, how cheerfully ought we to watch over one another! How gladly you who are older in the Divine life, ought to watch over the younger ones of the Lord’s family! If God enables you to have any of the joy of angels over repenting sinners, mind that you take some of the care which angels exercise over those who walk in God’s ways. What can I, the pastor of this huge church, and my brother and all the elders, do by way of watching over 5,000 of you? You must pastor yourselves to a large extent! Watch over one another. “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Visit each other in their sickness. Seek to bring back to Christ and the church all the backsliders whom you can find. Labor for the good of one another, for, in only this way can our task be done—and you shall be like the angels if you bear up the feeble ones in your hands lest they trip up and fall to their grievous hurt.  
Then next, how safe and happy we ought to feel when we know that God has charged the angels to take care of us! Do not be nervous, my dear Sister, the next time there is a little storm, or even a great storm. Do not be afraid, my dear Friend, when sickness comes into your house. Do not be alarmed, as perhaps you are, when you hear that there is fever next door to you. Remember the promise that precedes our text— “Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.” But suppose it should seem right to the Lord to let the plague come to you? And suppose you shall die of it? Well, you will the sooner be in Heaven! Therefore comfort one another with the reflection that all is well with you as long as you keep in the way of duty.  
And, lastly, how holy we ought to be with such holy beings watching over us! If the angels are always hovering round you, mind what you are doing! Would you, my dear Friend, have spoken as you did when you were coming in at that door, yonder, if you had seen an angel standing by your side, listening to what you were saying? Oh, no, you are wonderfully decorous when there is somebody near whom you respect! How often your glib tongue is checked when there is some Christian man or woman whom you highly esteem within hearing! How many a thing is done that would not be done under the eyes of one whom you love! It is not only true that “a bird of the air shall carry the voice and that which has wings shall tell the matter,” but it is also true that there are angels always watching over us. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that a woman in the public assembly ought to have her head covered because of the angels—a certain decorum was due because of the angels who were there. And I am sure that I may use the same argument concerning all our actions. Whether we are alone or in company, let us not sin because angels are always watching us. And, remember, the angels’ Lord is also watching us!  
May He graciously keep us in His holy way. And if we are so kept, we shall be preserved from all evil while we are here and, at last, we shall see His face with joy and live with Him forever! I would to God that all who are now present were in that holy way. I remind you once more that the entrance to it is by a door that has the blood-mark upon the lintel and the two doorposts—“The blood shall be to you for a token.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

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

Verse 25. My soul cleaves unto the dust. “It sticks to it as though it were glued to it. My soul cannot be lifted up, at least by myself, out of its sadness and its earthiness.” The Psalmist was not one who could boast of perfection. He had to lament that the earth which was in him by nature made even his soul cleave to Mother Earth. He did not like it. He was not content that it should be so and, therefore, he breathed this prayer—

25. Quicken You me according to Your word. “Lord, there is nothing but life that can bring me up out of the dust, for death lurks in the dust and the dust tends to death. Put life into me, Lord—Your life, the Divine life. You have promised to do this, therefore, do it, Lord, ‘according to Your word.’” That is a prayer which is always sure to succeed, for it is based upon the promise of God. Has the Lord promised anything? Then He will surely perform it! And you cannot use a better argument in prayer than to say to Him, “Do as You have said.” Or, as the Psalmist puts it, “Quicken You me according to Your word.”

26. I have declared my ways, and You heard me. “I have made a full confession to You, my God. I have acknowledged my fault wherein I was wrong and I have thanked You for your Grace given to me in anything wherein I was right.”

26. Teach me Your statutes. “O Lord, let me not have such a sorry tale to tell again. If my copy of Your handwriting has been badly written, set it afresh for me, I pray You. ‘Teach me Your statutes.’”

27. Make me to understand the way of Your precepts. “Let me know, O Lord, what the way of Your precepts are. Get me into that way and then, oh help me to keep in it all my life!”

27. So shall I talk of Your wondrous works. A man never talks rightly of God’s works till he knows God’s ways. And it is idle to talk of them if there is no doing at the back of the talking. So the Psalmist prays, “Make me to understand the way of Your precepts: so shall I talk of Your wondrous works.” To preach and not practice is very bad preaching! But first to understand the way of the Lord, then to run in it—and then to speak of it—this is well!

28. My soul melts for heaviness. The Hebrew word is, “drops.” The Psalmist’s soul was like water dripping from the eaves of a house in time of rain. There are two sorts of sorrow—the sorrow that rushes like a mighty torrent and the sorrow which is, perhaps, the worse of the two, which goes drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip—like the constant dripping which wears away stones—and which makes even the boldest heart to feel the attrition. “My soul melts, dissolves, drops, drips for heaviness.”

28. Strengthen You me. The Psalmist does not ask to have the trouble removed. He prays, “Help me to bear it.” Whenever there is a thing that is hard, the right way to cut through it is to get something that is still harder. If God will give us an adequate supply of His Grace, hard times will not wear us away! So the Psalmist prays, “Strengthen You me”—

28. According unto Your word. See how he clings to that expression, “according unto Your word”? He knows the power of that argument and, therefore, he uses it again and again!

29. Remove from me the way of lying. “Do not let me fall into any untrue habits. Do not let me profess to have had an experience which I have never felt, or talk about holy things of which I know nothing experimentally. Keep me from everything that has any trace of falsehood in it.”

29. And grant me Your Law graciously. “For Your Law is truth, and when Your Grace brings Your Law home to my heart, all that is false will be banished from me.”

30. I have chosen the way of truth. Your judgments have I laid before me. “I have laid them before me as a man puts his model in front of him that he may work to it.” It is well for us to have God’s way and God’s judgments always before our eyes, that we may be duly impressed and rightly guided by them.

31. I have stuck unto Your testimonies. Just now the Psalmist said that his soul stuck to the earth, yet at the same time he was sticking to God’s testimonies, for every good man is two men. There is a new-birth man who sticks to God’s testimonies, and there is that old carnal nature in us which cleaves to the dust.

31, 32. O Lord, put me not to shame. I will run the way of Your commandments, when You shall enlarge my heart. That is, “When You shall give me liberty of heart, then I will run in the way of Your commandments. When the impediments are removed—when the sin which does so easily entangle me is taken away—then will I run with delight in the way of Your commandments!

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LOVE’S REWARD  
NO. 3433

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1914. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he has known My name.” Psalm 91:14.**

THAT this Psalm was written by David we see no reason to doubt. In the previous verses we have the words of the Psalmist himself. Here, however, there is a change of speaker. The promise is spoken by God, Himself, in these three closing sentences. Doubtless the words of Inspired men are very precious as a Divine testimony, but when God, Himself, directly speaks to us in His own name, what an extraordinary weight attaches to every syllable He utters! Dear child of God, you who are a believer in Jesus, can you not think that you hear your God saying, concerning you, with His own, gracious assuring voice, “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him”? And notice that He repeats these words, “I will,” four times, as if to give them the most striking emphasis! Surely this is intended to minister some comfort and refreshing to the Lord’s people. I pray the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to give the Word and to apply it.

“Because,” says the Most High, “he has set his love upon Me.” We must look at this carefully, for it contains a description of character. If we can find ourselves classified here, it will be well for us, otherwise we shall have reason for deep anxiety. Is our love set upon God? Search your hearts, for the question is very pungent. The original Hebrew has more force in it than our translation expresses, although I do not know exactly how to improve upon our version. The idea, however, is something like this—“To have fallen in love”—as though with all the tenderness of passion and all the transport of devotion, the creature yearned for his Creator, and mortal man cherished an intense affection for the eternal God.

I. THE HEART’S SUPREME LOVE.  
“He has set his love upon Me.” His love! Such love as draws the sympathies with its irresistible attraction, as brightens the thoughts with its fervent glow, as knits the heart with its indissoluble bonds! Yes, such love as melts the soul with its potent charms. I would have you think of it, now, as a fact, not as a fiction, or a fancy. That word, love, is translatable into the many tongues of earth, and so it passes current among the millions in every age and every clime. But only hearts attuned can feel it—it finds echo only in the purest minds. But, to explain it, why, one had need combine a poet’s genius with the emotions of a child, a husband or wife, a parent, a friend, all earthly relations in one to paint genuine love in living language! And even then it were all felt, and little, very little, told! Oh, but this is a high matter, for a man to set his love upon God! His love—not a cold sentiment, not a languid approbation, not a mild complacency, not any mere formal respect, but love, burning love, which, like coals of juniper, give forth a vehement flame—“his love set upon God,” like a river that is set upon its course to the sea, its volume always swelling, its tide becoming more and more rapid.  
Answer now, dear Hearer, can you say that you have set your love upon God? If so, you have been the subject of a great change—a mysterious transformation—for your heart was naturally at enmity to God, and the instincts of your mind and the desires of the flesh were alien to Him. Look back. Compare your present self with your former self and consider the difference. If you were not, in your unregenerate state, in active hostility to God, yet you were indifferent towards Him. God was not in all your thoughts. You could rise at morn and lay down to rest at night without enquiring after God. You could go forth to your work and labor, and return to seek your recreation without seeking or acknowledging God in all your ways. Gladly would you try even to suffer, to die upon the bed of sickness when called to it, struggling with weakness, confiding in the physician’s skill—without appealing to God your Creator and your Preserver! This was your natural state, the bent and bias of your perverse will! And in such waywardness you would have continued to this hour if the free, rich, undeserved Sovereign efficacious Grace of God had not interposed! Is your love now set upon God? Then a great change has passed over you as though a dead man had been quickened into life! As though the darkness of midnight had been suddenly turned to the brightness of midday! A great wonder of Grace, a miracle of saving mercy has been worked in you!  
Though you must know to whom it is to be ascribed, let me refresh your memory, awhile, that I may awaken your gratitude. Comes not this of the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working? Depend upon it, only He who made you, could make you new! Only that Voice which brought light out of darkness, and order out of chaos, could have dispelled your vain infatuations or inflamed your soul with love, and made your known apathy and aversion give place to a sacred ardor and a devout affection! Surely the Kingdom of God has come near unto you! Salvation has come to your house! The Lord has looked upon you and spoken to you! The Eternal Spirit has brooded over your dull faculties and, as it were, by the breath of God’s mouth you have been regenerated! You are born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible— by the Word of God which lives and abides forever. Therefore you are in Christ, a new creature! Revolve these things in your soul, this array of lively blessings, that your gratitude may bloom with joy in God and your praise to the Lord may burst into melodious song! Do I not speak of a matter which should compel the tongue of every redeemed man to cry, “Hosanna in the highest”? Were it marvelous if a thousand voices should utter a loud hallelujah?  
Your love to God is no self-sown plant. If you have set your love on Him, it is because He first set His love on you. What? Did your love go spontaneously towards God, without any constraint to violate your will? When He lifted upon you the light of His Countenance, and when you found favor in His eyes, there were charms, attractions, drawings conformable to the nature of your mind! There were sweet constraints of Divine enchantment which enamored you of the beauties of Christ—a potent spell of Divine persuasion which led you to listen to the voice of Christ and believe! And now that you have seen and known Him, you cannot do otherwise than love Him! God has been revealed to you in the Person and work of His Son, and your heart has been warmed—your affections have been kindled—your whole soul has been drawn towards Him! So the Lord observes you, and says, “He has set his love upon Me.” Are you the man of whom God speaks? Then I ask you to avow yourself to yourself and to your God, now, in the presence of all His people. “Yes,” you can say, “I do love my God. I cannot now live without thoughts of Him, nor do I wish to do so. And when, for a while, through pressure of care I do not turn my soul towards God, yet, when the pressure is removed, my mind comes back to Him, as the dove flies back to the dovecot, and as the needle trembles back to the pole. Never am I happier than when my thoughts are with my God, nor is there any thought so uppermost in my soul as the thought that He loves me and that, consequently, I desire to live in obedience to His commands, seeking His honor and endeavoring to promote His Glory.” I, hope, Beloved, if the Lord Jesus were to appeal to you, as He did to His servant, Peter, you could stand the threefold interrogation “Do you love Me?” And you would answer with Peter at the last, “You know all things. You know that I love You.” Let this love of yours, then, which you possess, be in your soul more and more a consuming flame! Let nothing come in to quench it or to dim its ardor.

Let nothing in your conduct obscure its truthfulness. Suffer no idol to divide the Throne which God has claimed in your affections. Cry against the admission of any intruder. Beseech the Lord to stay near to you and to drive far away every attraction and allurement that would stir up rivalry in your breast. Be it your own strong resolve, in the power of His Spirit, that, as you do love Him, you will seek to love Him more and more and, till your last dying day, it shall be your soul’s passion and master thought that God should be All-in-All enshrined within the heart as the bosom’s Lord. “He has set his love upon Me.” I think I hear some of you say, “Oh, that I could love Him! I am half afraid to say that I do love Him.” Yet, perhaps, you are the very persons that, if brought to the test, would prove to be the truest lovers of your Savior. But I hear your inward whisper, “Though I do much that might make me fear and question the sincerity of my love to Him, yet, at times my soul’s emotions get the better of these qualms, for a while, and speak out their fervor. Yes, my Jesus! I do love You! I do know and feel that You are my portion. Oh, my God, I do desire to love You more. I do give myself up to You.” You know, Beloved, that it is not always easy to move the affection of love. It may be in the soul and lie there quietly. Though I know that I love the Savior, I remember a time when I was in great doubt whether I had any love to Him, till, as I listened to a sermon from a good Brother, the Truth he uttered so stirred my soul that it set the love that had been slumbering in my spirit all in motion and I perceived that, after all, I did love my Lord and Master, and had His truth near to my heart! Now, it may be that God will raise up something in Providence, or something in connection with some fellow Christian, that will cause your love to flame up and you will say within yourself, “There it is, after all! I was afraid it had died.” Do you remember when you first set your love on God? Do you remember the place where Jesus met with you, where the weight of sin was taken from you and your transgression, like a thick cloud, was blown away? Ah, then the Savior was very, very dear to you. You fixed your love on Him. Do you not remember, since then, many high times and choice occasions when you have renewed your vow, when your soul has stretched out her wings towards Jesus, and He has looked towards you, and you towards Him, and the love of your espousals has been restored? Oh, that it might be so now! But whether or not there are any flames of affection, let the coals burn on, and say within your spirit, “Yes, my Savior, beyond a doubt, I do love You and I cling to You! Better it were that my heart should cease to pray than cease to love You!”  
I am afraid there are some here that neither set their hearts on God nor care to do so. To them I can only say, God forbid that your present indifference should be your permanent choice! Your resolve not to love the God who made you, not to love the Redeemer of men, the Savior of sinners, the Spirit of Grace—such an obstinate resolution as that will involve the loss of all the privileges which belong to the lovers of Christ! And in that day “when the nearer waters roll, when the tempest rages high,” you may regret, when it is too late, that you rejected that Jesus who, as Lover of our souls, can alone find us a haven from the storm and protect us from the wrath to come. You know, after all, that they are happiest who love God the best. I can only pray for you that His Spirit may teach you wisdom and lead you to renounce your culpable indifference and your wicked aversion—and draw you into the fellowship of those who have set their love upon God. Now we must pass on. Is our love set? Then the next thing we have to notice is—  
II. GOD’S LOVE PROVED TO THE LOVING HEART.  
“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him.” Rightly understood, this savors not of human merit, but of Divine Mercy. The possession of this love reflects no credit on the creature, but the production of it redounds to the praise of the Creator. He that gives Grace for Grace adds here another golden link to the chain of His own loving kindnesses when He says, “I will deliver him.” By what gentle ways does a mother fondle her baby till the wee child clings to her? And to no stranger’s arms will it go without a scream! The mother is pleased. She presses the infant to her breast and she says, “You sweet, affectionate little thing, I will take care of you. Nobody shall hurt you.” Even so, Beloved, “As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you,” says the Lord. There is more than a mother’s tenderness in our heavenly Father’s heart! Come, you children of God, take this gracious Word from your Father’s lips, and let your souls be satisfied with fatness as you feed on it, “I will deliver him.” Does it not mean that He will defend you from all your foes and all your fears? Are you exposed to ridicule, slander, persecution, tyranny? Or are you teased and tormented with the fawning looks, the treacherous words, the cunning devices, the gaudy allurements of those who would beguile you? Fear not their faces, whether they frown or smile! Cling to your own Protector, for thus says the Lord, “I will deliver you.” Your worst enemies are evil spirits, able to tempt you in many ways, and to suit their devices to your weaknesses—fear them not, for even the Prince of the power of the air, though he comes against you with all his fiery darts at once, shall not prevail to destroy you, since it is written, “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him.” As you love God, He will certainly deliver you from all the powers of earth and Hell. It may be that your temporal trials harass you. Are you poor and friendless, without supplies and without prospects? None know the stings of poverty but those who endure them. It were foolish to fret yourselves for the morrow while you have enough for today. Take heart, you that love the Lord, and cling closer to Him when the peril seems nearer, for this promise goes before you, “I will deliver him.” Yes, doubtless the dinner is ordered when the cupboard is bare, for is it not written, “They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be fed”?  
Or, perhaps, sickness, has stealthily crept over your mortal frame. Gradually you have been weakened in body. Why should you tremble because of the infirmities of your constitution, or the natural decay that comes with growing years, for you shall be rescued from all the illconsequences of depression of spirit and of weakness of the flesh—“I will deliver him.” It may be that bereavement has deprived your life of its joys. You have been losing friends, one by one. Already you have borne to the grave some of the nearest and dearest of your kindred—and others are going. Fear haunts your breast that you will soon be left alone. What will you do when all help has failed and all light faded from your dwelling? Why, will you not then have this promise to fall back upon?—“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him”? There are no straits or struggles, no cares or crosses, no weary loads or dreary hardships, no privation at present, or famine in prospect, no pains or perils of any kind out of which the All-Bounteous God cannot, and will not, deliver His people! Only believe the promise and you shall find it true! “I will deliver him.” Do you tell me that you are haunted by strong temptation, that you have been sorely beset with them of late—that your condition and position are full of danger and jeopardy—that, being tempted by those who have great influence over you, your steps have well near slipped? Go to your knees! Cry to your God for strength to endure and might to overcome, but be not dismayed with cowardly fear, for if you have set your love on God, there stands this record, engraved as in eternal brass, “I will deliver him.” You shall have Grace equal to your time of trial! You shall break the snares of the foe! Though you are shut in like Samson in Gaza, and compassed about on all sides with temptations, you shall wake up as a giant, refreshed and, by your strength in God, pluck up the gates of the fortress and carry them away—post and bar and all—and your soul shall be free!  
Perhaps, however, you are the victim of another fear, you are afraid of dying. Dying is at no time child’s play, and he that treats the matter lightly knows not what he does. But you, perhaps, are subject to bondage through fear of death. Its dread accompaniments, pain of body, gasping for breath. Its strange outlook, a vast eternity. Its near approach, the rolling up of the curtain that hides from mortal view the scenes that lie beyond—all these appall you! Oh, be not troubled in mind! Have you set your love on Jesus, and does your heart cling to the Father, God? Then on the bed of languishing you shall find gracious succor and grateful relief. When your heart grows faint and your flesh wastes away, your soul shall be strengthened and your spirit endowed with fresh vigor! The noisome graveyard shall be fragrant with flowers of Paradise and the dark sepulcher shall be lighted up with a blessed hope! You shall be gently led, not roughly driven, through the dark shades. And as with the tender notes of a requiem, sweet though solemn, you shall hear this glad word, “I will deliver him: I will deliver him.” Delivered you shall be! The trial shall issue in triumph! Victim of death, you shall be victor over it! As in a chariot of fire, you shall be borne from the land of gloom to the land of joy! To your Father and your God you shall rise, leading your captivity captive. But ah, this is not a subject to stand and preach about—it is rather one upon which to sit and think! So sit down, you who love the Savior, and again, and again, and again delight yourself with this sure word of Covenant promise which is given to you for your portion, “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him”!

III. GOD’S PROMISE TO HIGH KNOWLEDGE.  
It is set forth in the latter part of our text, “Because He has known My name, I will set him on high.” This expresses a sacred mystery, “He has known My name.” The Hebrews of old were not accustomed to use the name of Jehovah, either in ordinary speech or in their writing. In their sacred books they were commonly in the habit of putting in the word, “Adonai,” or, “Lord,” instead of the word, “Jehovah,” the name of their God. To many of the heathen nations the distinctive name of the one God was not even known! They only heard it alluded to by the peculiar people who delighted to keep the name to themselves. Now there is always a secret about that vital religion which comes to the Believer not in word, only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit—a secret which the natural man cannot discern. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.” The particular form of expression used in the text arises from the fact that there were some in Israel who did not know the name of God, while others did not know Him as the “I AM”—by that superlative name which is His memorial unto all generations. See Exodus 3:13-15. And just so, there are today people taught of God, who know the Lord, while the rest of mankind know Him not.  
Let us try to give this matter a practical bearing.  
“He has known My name.” This means information. Have you, O my Soul, a part in that high privilege of which our Great Intercessor spoke when He said to His Father, “This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent”? Ask yourself, my Hearer, the question. Are you initiated into the mystery of that fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, which they enjoy who walk in the Light of God? Do you know the living God? Do you know that He is, and there is none beside Him? Do you know that He is almighty and, therefore, do you bow down before Him? Have you seen that He is merciful and, therefore, put your trust in Him? Have you understood that He is just and, therefore, do you fear Him? Have your eyes ever perceived the blended attributes that make up the crown of Deity and compel you to worship Him in the beauty of holiness? Can you discern how impartial He is in punishing sin and yet how gracious in providing a Ransom for sinners? As for the ungodly world, it concerns them not whether there is a God or not! And as to the excellence of His Character, they do not regard it. But those whom He loves and whom He will set on high, delight to know the name of God and to spell out its mystic letters as they are painted on His works, unfolded in His ways and revealed in His Word! They make it their study to know what can be known of Him. God is the one Object of their life’s pursuit. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, is their instinctive cry! And the Holy Spirit is pleased to help them in their searches. Opinions, conjectures, guesses at the Truths of God count for nothing. Do you know for sure the name of the Lord, so that without hesitation you can say, “I know whom I have believed”? “He has known My name.” That means trust. He has relied upon it. He has come and depended upon the name of God as his dwelling place, the home of his soul. Wherein is your reliance, O Man, O Woman? On what do you depend for time or eternity? Is it on your own strength, your works, or your merits? Is it on your wit, your wealth, your rank? Ah, then these poor props will fail you before long. But happy is that man who knows the name of God as his confidence, his refuge, his high tower, his place of defense and security!  
To know God’s name, likewise implies experience. I think many of you could rise and say, “Glory be to God, I do know Him by the distresses in which I have called upon Him, and the deliverances He has sent me! In my hours of darkness I have found Him to be a never-failing light. I have gone to His Mercy Seat in times of need, and then He has appeared to me. I have enquired at His holy oracle, and He has answered me with the Words of His mouth.” Little can anyone know of God who has but heard of Him with the hearing of the ears. Nothing is known of God till we know Him by experience—nothing that is of value. All that the ear learns of God from another’s teaching is shallow and superficial. Your heart must know God by its own deep communing. Let me ask you, dear Hearer, how far you have gone in this school of instruction and discipline? We shall ascertain who you are and where you are by the answer you are able to give to this question. Tens of thousands of men walk through this world and never meet with God—they do not seek Him in their troubles. They may invoke His name, and cry out, “God help me!” in a stress of grief or a surge of pain, but they forget Him when their trials are over.  
Oh, how different the children of God! “They that know Your name will put their trust in You.” Theirs is not occasional, but habitual drawing near unto God! A good minister, sitting one day in the house of one of his people, overheard a dialog with a beggar woman who knocked at the door. The good housewife opened it and said to the poor creature, “Do not trouble me, now. I do not intend to give you anything today.” The reply was, “Please don’t say so, Ma’am. I am no upstart. You know me very well. I am an old beggar at your door. I think I have begged of you every week for the last seven years. Do not turn me away, kind lady, I pray you.” She was about to be sent off without any relief, when the minister said, “Give her something for my sake. She is the exact picture of me. Her plea with you is just what I am obliged to plead with my God whenever I go to Him. ‘Lord, give me Your mercy. I am no new comer—I am an old beggar. I have been dependent upon Your bounty, a pensioner upon Your charity these many, many years. Oh, cast me not away!” The Christian’s life is a life of dependence upon God. He always has to go to Him. There is never an hour in which he could do without his God. Now this is the man off whom the text speaks, “He has known My name”—by long experience—he has come to rely upon My goodness and My love.”  
Then, Beloved, you will observe the promise that is given to such, “I will set him on high because he has known My name.” “If He knows My name, I taught it to him—My Grace made him know it. And now, having given him so much Grace, I will give him more, and I will give him glory at the last—I will set him on high.” What does it mean, to be set on high by God? It certainly implies rank. The Christian is a man of rank. How so? Because every man whom God sets on high, He acknowledges as His child, makes him to be, “an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ.” There is much respect shown in the world to the young man or the young woman whose good fortune it is to be heir of a noble title and large estates. But what must it be to be “an heir of God,” to be “a joint-heir with Christ Jesus”? To be the son of a prince or the son of a king is no small thing in the esteem of most men. To have the blue blood in one’s veins is thought to be honorable. To trace your pedigree up to an emperor is a matter for pride. But the child of God, mean as he may be reckoned on this base earth, though he should have lived and died in an attic or a cellar, near the wind or near the damp soil, is a prince of the blood imperial! He is of the royal family of Heaven! He shall be a peer! He shall be, before long, in the court of the Most High! The blood royal runs within his veins, only it is not the royalty of a day, nor does it belong to the crown that is so readily taken from the wearer’s brow. The “crown that fades not away” belongs to every man who has set his love upon God and who knows God’s name! He is set on high, for God has made him of a princely rank.  
The promise to “set him on high” will further mean a place of security. The Christian, when his faith is as it should be, is set so high above his enemies that they cannot reach him. We have sometimes been on the top of the Alps and seen a storm below in the valley. All has been calm over our heads in the sunlight, while below there has been all the tumult of the storm. God sets His servants on high, and often so high that when others think they will surely disturb their peace and break their comfort, they have been smiling and rejoicing in the clear atmosphere of Heaven, undismayed by the tumult that has raged beneath them! “The Lord is my Shepherd” they say, “I shall not want. He prepares a table for me in the presence of my enemies.” It must have been a glorious thing for those Frenchmen who went up in one of those balloons that ascended from the besieged city of Paris, to look down on the Prussian soldiers, vainly trying to reach them with their bullets, but they were up too high! It must give one a sense of security to think of the bullets coning half-way up, and then falling short. But such is the position of the Christian by faith. He is on a rock so high that all the gunshots of his enemies cannot reach him! He is perfectly safe while he is near his God. “I will set him on high”—out of harm’s reach—“because he knows My name.” It is rank and it is safety.  
To be set on high, again, means happiness. He is the highest man, in some respects, that is the happiest man, for he wears contentment within his bosom. To bear within the soul a pure satisfaction with the Divine will has more to make him wealthy than all the coffers of Croesus! And such is the Christian. Commend me to the man whose sin is forgiven, to whom a perfect righteousness is imputed, who is adopted into the Divine family, from whose past all the blackness is blotted out, whose present is full of contentment and whose future is radiant with glory—commend me, I say, to such a man whom nothing can separate from the love of Christ—a man to whom all things belong, whether things present or things to come, a man to whom Christ, Himself, belongs, and all the treasures of God—and say if such a man is not blessed to all the intents of bliss, where are the blessed ones to be found? If he is not ranked among the happy, and set aloft above all others, where can happiness even be dreamed of? Verily the true Christian has a portion of happiness allotted to him here below which far excels all the voluptuous pleasures and intoxicating joys of sense! He has a right to be cheerful, a duty to rejoice evermore! The worldling boasts that he is happier than you are—it is a vain boast, an empty vaunt. His mirth—what does it consists of but quips, cranks, and wanton wiles? His joys but flash and crack and sparkle—like thorns that burn for a few minutes, and then turn to ashes. Their fun will never compare with your happiness! They may have more laughter, but you have more liveliness. They dissipate their spirits, while you renovate your strength! Gloom follows their glee, but your calm eventides forestall bright tomorrows, and your present serenity is the sure presage of a welcome eternity! Then “hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.”

“Because he has known My name, I will set him on high.” Yes, Beloved, He has raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Before long, so short the time with some of us, that it may seem like tomorrow, we shall have our place among the angels. Among the angels, did I say? Nearer the Throne of God than they! Where even Gabriel cannot sit—at God’s right hand, by His side who wears our manhood on the Throne of God! There will He set us on high, where sits the Crucified, His hands still bearing the scars, and His feet the nail prints—He will set us there! Do not our hearts leap at the very thought? Worthy to be cast into the lowest pit of Hell, and yet Infinite Mercy promised us a seat of honor in Heaven! During the last week two, three venerable Brothers and Sisters, ornaments of our denomination, have passed away—some with whom it has been my habit to take sweet counsel. There was one dear Brother, who, last week, was hale and strong—a man who, though his hands were busy and his mind occupied with the cares of this life, delighted to preach the Gospel and was the pastor of a Church. When I heard of his departure, I seemed to realize more vividly how close we are to the world to come. Very soon, my Brothers and Sisters, you will hear of some in this congregation that have passed the flood. We have dear names in our recollection, the names of those dear to this congregation, whose spirits I could imagine are with us whenever we gather at the Communion Table. I can, without any immoderate stretch of fancy, picture them often within these aisles. So much did they seem to be part and parcel of ourselves, that when I miss them from their known place, I marvel that they shall occupy it no longer. And before long some of you also will be missing—the pastor, perhaps? Or the deacons, or the Elders, or some of you whose old familiar faces greet us constantly. At length you are gone! But oh, what a blessing if gone to swell the number of the glorified, to complete the orchestra of Heaven, to add some fresh notes to the everlasting music! The army there has gaps in its ranks—they, without us, cannot be perfect. We shall soon go over to the majority. We shall soon go from the militant to the triumphant, from those that sit down here and weep over their imperfections, to those who sit up there, see their Lord and rejoice that they are like He! Let us anticipate the reunion, there, and celebrate the communion, here, full of the joys of hope and the visions of that better land towards which we journey as pilgrims! “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him”—there is your promise for this life! “I will set him on high because he has known My name”—there is your promise of the life to come!  
I wish, oh, how I wish, this promise belonged to all of you! Alas, that some of you do not know His name! Neither do you set your love upon Him. You must go away without this blessing! Do seek it. Do ask forgiveness at the Savior’s feet. God is willing to hear prayer, and when He compels you to pray, He will surely give the answer. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 42:1-6.**

Verse 1. Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Elect, in whom My soul delights: I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Verily this prophecy is concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Observe the title which He takes. He is called the Servant of God. The Father calls Him, His Servant. Above all others is Christ the Servant of the Highest deigning to become the Servant of servants, though He is the King of kings. “Whom I uphold”—which may be read two ways. According to some renderings, it should be, “Whom I lean upon”—as if God leaned the full weight of His Glory upon Christ and gave over the work of Grace into His hands—that is, if the passage is read passively. If actively, it runs as in our text, “Whom I uphold.” And both are true. God leans upon Christ. Christ draws His strength from God. They co-work, and mutual is the Glory.“My Elect.” That is first. “My choice One,” for there is none so choice as Christ. “My elected One,” for Christ is the Head of election. We are chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world so that God specially calls Him, “My Elect.” “In whom My soul delights.” The delight of the Father in the Son is Infinite. He delighted in His Person. Now He delights in the work which He has accomplished. The delight of the Father is in Christ, and He delights in us because we are in Him. If, indeed, we are members of Christ, He is well pleased with us for Christ’s sake. “In whom My soul delights.” “I have put My Spirit upon Him.” That was publicly done when He was baptized in the Jordan. The Spirit without measure rests and abides on Him, our Covenant Head. “He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” Rejoice, then, you Gentiles! You are no longer excluded. At first the Word of God came to the Jews, only, but He has given the Man, Christ Jesus, who has brought forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2-3. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. Jesus was gentle, retiring, meek, quiet. His testimony was a very powerful one, but not a noisy one. He sought no honor among men. He frequently forbade the healed ones to tell of His miracles. He rather retire than came into public notice. He was not contentious. He did not seek to put out the Pharisees, who were like smoking flax. He was never hard towards the tender ones, but always gentle as a nurse among her children. Now it is very often found that where there is quietness and meekness, there is, nevertheless, great firmness of purpose. Noise and weakness go together, but quietness and strength are frequently combined. So read the next verse.

4. He shall not fail. He shall not faint. So it may be.  
4. Nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His Law. This quiet, gentle Christ goes on pushing on His empire and extending His dominion till these far-off islands of the sea already know His power! And the day comes when the whole round earth shall be obedient to His sway! O blessed Christ, how glad we are to think that when we are discouraged, You are not, and when we fail and faint, You do not. You hold on forever, like the sun who comes forth from his chamber in the morning and stops not till he has run his race.  
5, 6. Thus says God the LORD, He that created the heavens and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it, He that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand, and will keep You, and give You for a Covenant of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles. Thus the great God commissions Christ! Thus He declares that the eternal power and Godhead will back Him up till the Gentiles shall perceive His Light, and the people shall be brought into Covenant with God.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3416 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SHALL AND WILL  
NO. 3416

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1914.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.”  
Psalm 91:15.

THIS Psalm is full to the very brim of exceedingly great and precious promises, nor is our text the least choice of them all. We have here two pearls. I am not sufficient merchantman to be able to say which is the more precious, but I am certain that the two put together are priceless beyond all computation!

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.” “He shall call upon Me.” Prayer is, itself, a blessing. The desire to pray, the disposition to pray, the resolve, the determination to pray—what hopeful, healthy symptoms these are! But to be able to pray—ah, what some might give if they could put forth their soul’s strength in this cheering exercise! Then comes the Divine engagement favorably to hear prayer, “And I will answer him.” What would some give, especially the lost—those beyond the reach of mercy—if they could but hope that their cry of anguish could meet with a response of pity! That God would answer them, even if it were to relieve, though it might not be to remove their torments! We have this privilege. Prayer is encouraged and prayer is answered! These two are stars which shine in the Christian’s sky, lit up by God to lead him to the land where darkness shall be all unknown!

We have no time for a preface, therefore let us at once notice that prayer must be offered—and that prayer must be answered.  
I. THERE MUST BE PRAYER.  
“He shall call upon Me.” It is not said, “I will give him this and that without his praying.” He that asks receives. To him that knocks it shall be opened. He that seeks finds. The asking, the knocking, the seeking must come before the reception—the opening of the door and the finding. This is God’s way. “For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” Though the promise is good and sure, and will be fulfilled, we are to bring it in our hands, lay it before the Throne of God and plead with God’s faithfulness and mercy that He will do as He has said. Prayer is essential.  
The text seems to assert that the man who dwells near to God must and shall pray. “He shall call upon me.” Others may refuse—man has a will of his own, but this will shall not stand in the way or prevent prayer. He shall be willing to pray. He shall be made willing in the day of God’s power. If having received a new heart and a right spirit, his will shall be in such gracious order that he shall will to pray! God declares that if other men are silent, this man

 shall pray. This is a bell which God will ring! This is a flute upon which God will play. This is an organ which shall send forth its peals, for God puts His hands upon the keys. This man shall pray!  
Beloved, you who know Christ, who are in the habit of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, you know that there is a constraint upon you that you should pray. You are free agents, just as Paul was in the matter of preaching and yet he said, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!” You are free agents in the matter of prayer, and yet do you not feel that there is a Divine compelling that moves you, so that it is woe unto you unless you draw near to God?  
This necessity springs from divers causes. Within you there dwells the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of intercession. Wherever He is, there will be a groaning which cannot be uttered—intercessions made within the heart which has become the temple of the Blessed Spirit! You cannot help praying if the Spirit of God is in your hearts. Drive out that sacred Visitor and you will soon become as dumb as the fish in the sea— but while He is there, you shall be like the seraphs who continually cry before Him. Your prayer and your praise shall never cease, but, like the incense upon the golden altar—it shall always smoke—the fire shall never go out by day or by night. The Presence of the Holy Spirit secures the fulfillment of this promise, “He shall call upon Me.”  
Moreover, as the Holy Spirit gradually teaches you and educates you, everything that you learn tends to make you pray. I say everything, my Brothers and Sisters, whether you read in the illuminated books wherein you see the Glory of the Person of Christ, or whether you turn to the black-letter volume in which you discover the depravity of your own heart. Whichever may be the book, all sacred literature alike shall lead you to pray. Certainly a sight of your own heart will do it. You will tremble as you see the envy, the pride, the murders, the murmurings, the rebellions of every sort that lurk there—and you will turn to the Strong for strength, feeling that the monster evils of your nature cannot be overcome by your own powers! They have chariots of iron, they dwell in cities that are walled up to the skies! You cannot drive them out, except a mightier power than yours shall be enlisted in the warfare. Hence you will be driven to cry mightily unto the Lord God of Israel, that He will put forth His Omnipotence because of your impotence to overcome your corruptions and lusts!  
And a sight of Christ—which is the opposite extreme of experience— equally instructive and far more pleasant—a sight of Christ will bring you to your knees. When Peter’s boat was full and began to sink, then down he went, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Sometimes a sense of the weight of sin may make us wish to escape from Christ. Sad that it should be so! But when we see the Glory of Christ, Himself, and behold His condescension towards us, then we come very near to Him and beg Him to abide with us, finding arguments in our circumstances to compel Him to tarry yet a little longer since we cannot afford to lose his blessed fellowship.  
So, as we learn and grow in Grace, we are sure to grow in prayer! If we do not increase in prayerfulness, we may take it as a sign that we are not advancing in the Divine Life. I am certain that the closet is the thermometer of the entire man. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, how grow you if this is the case? How is it with some of you if this is true? Oh, how little time is spent upon your knees! Time, however, is of small consequence, for I sometimes think we can pray more in five minutes at one time than we can in hours at other seasons. Have you had personal dealings with God of late? Have you come close to the Most High? Have you wrestled with the Covenant Angel? If not, there is something wrong. Begin the search! Perhaps under your beloved Rachel, your most favored delight, some evil is hidden, some idol concealed. Search and look, for if there is a lack of prayerfulness, there is mischief somewhere.  
Moreover, dear Friends, not only does the Holy Spirit compel us to pray. Not only will all that we learn from Him lead us to prayer, but I think the sense of holy joy which communion with God in prayer brings will entice us into our retirement. We can look back upon some very, very happy times that we have had, when no stranger’s foot could intrude into the sacred enclosure of our retreat with the Most High. Have we not looked into the face of God—a marvelous sight! And have we not been made to reflect from our own faces, afterwards, the light of His Glory? Have we not spoken to Christ? Why, I dare to say there are some of us who have as surely spoken with Him as a man speaks with his friend! And it has sometimes become to us scarcely a matter of faith as to whether there was a Christ or not, and whether He heard and fulfilled our desires, for we have whispered right into His ear and have felt Him to be near us. I do not mean with any carnal feeling, or under a sense of mere excitement, but in all sobriety, when there was no flush of feeling, for we have been heavy of heart with the world’s troubles, or we have been racked with physical pain. Or at other times, when our passions have been subdued by long reading, by searching of the Word, or by the exercise of prayer—then in our clearest senses we have been cognizant of spiritual things as surely as ever in our lives we were conscious of worldly things! Well, now, having once been at that table, we long to get there again! Having once sipped of this glorious river, we shall never be content with the muddy rivers of Egypt anymore! We long for the hour to strike when secular business shall be over, that we may begin spiritual business, the real business of our souls in commerce with Heaven! We have wished that we could prolong the time when we could sit, like David, before the Lord—when our spirit could gather such confidence that we could almost dance before the Lord as he did when girded with a linen ephod. I am sure that the sweetness of prayer attracts and draws the Believer. Even as birds are drawn with baits towards the snare, so towards the holy exercise of prayer we are drawn by the sweet attractions it has.  
The Lord takes care that His people shall pray by giving them a plentiful supply of daily trials and needs. If there is anyone here without needs, I can suppose him to live without prayer. And if you have had a long course of prosperity, I can easily imagine that the Mercy Seat has grown neglected. But it will not be so with those of you who have to fight hard for daily bread, or with those of you who have many cares in the household, or who have much trouble in your position in life by persecution, by ridicule and sneers. Certainly, we who are engaged in the business of a large Church with the care of many souls upon us, cannot afford to do without prayer. And when we come into contact with other people’s souls, and get to be earnest about them, if we did not pray, we would be worse monsters than those that throw their young into the depths of the sea, for we should have utterly forsaken those who have a call and claim upon us, deserting them in the most important of matters, neglecting to make intercession before the Lord for them. Surely, we would sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. You who never look after sinners and do not care whether they perish or not, you can live without prayer. But those of you who come into contact with the desponding and try to encourage them, and find you cannot—you who talk with the despairing and find you cannot comfort them—you are driven to God! You call to Him to do what you cannot—to perform what you cannot accomplish. I am persuaded that the more intelligently active and the more earnestly vigorous a man is in God’s work, the more will he find the necessity of prayer. I do not wonder that Christ spent whole nights in prayer. As a Man, He could not have preached and done all He did without it. It would not have been possible to have sustained the ardor of such zeal daily, hourly, incessantly—without feeding it by nightly, restless, almost incessant intercessions! Brothers and Sisters, God will have us pray! And if we will not pray by reason of charm, He will force us to pray by reason of fear! If we will not pray when the dish is dainty, He will break our teeth with gravel and make us drunk with wormwood. If threats will not bring you to your knees, trials shall! If one cut of the rod does not remind you of your negligence, you shall have stroke upon stroke till there are welts upon the skin, till you have smarted, groaned and wept—till at length you shall say, “Before I was afflicted from the Mercy Seat, I went astray, but now have I kept Your Word and come near to Your Throne of Grace.” But you shall call upon Him. If you are elect, you shall cry unto Him. “Behold, he prays,” must, and shall be said of you! If you are a quickened soul, you shall pray. You shall not be allowed to forget to breathe out your soul unto God! If the Lord intends to crown you in Glory, He will make you wrestle in prayer before you win that crown! “He shall call upon me.” I delight to look at the text in this light—not merely as the Christian’s duty and privilege, but as God’s own purpose to make us pray! By the Divine influence of His Holy Spirit and by the workings of His Providence, He will compel His beloved ones to live near to Him. “He shall call upon Me.” And now, please, to observe the relative truth—  
II. PRAYER WILL BE ANSWERED.  
“And I will answer him.” If your experience has not got so far as the first head, you cannot enjoy the second. If you do not feel the propulsions and compulsions of the Holy Spirit compelling you to pray, you will have nothing to do with this—“And I will answer him.” But if you have been much engaged in prayer—then, as there was a necessity for you to pray, so there is a necessity for God to answer!

Let me show you this. It is a part of the Divine scheme and plan by which God governs the world and manages Providence that men should pray and that He should answer them. I do not know why God is pleased so to ordain it, but I do know that this is one of His statutes. In reading Scripture, you constantly see evidence of it in precept, in promise and in example. Now, when the sun rises, there is light. Why, I do not know. There might have been light without the sun and there might have been a sun that gave no light, but God has been pleased to put these two things together—sunrise and light. So whenever there is prayer, there is a blessing. I do not know why. There might have been prayer without a blessing, for there is in the world of wrath. And there might have been a blessing without prayer, for it often is sent to some who sought it not. But God has been pleased to make this a rule for the government of the moral and spiritual universe, that there shall be prayer, first, and that then there shall be the answer to prayer. I do not expect God to alter His rule about the sun rising. I do not expect to see it light in the middle of the night before the sun is up. Neither do I expect to see God altering this rule—that there shall be a blessing upon the Church without His people seeking it! If we did but observe it aright, we would perceive this to be as certainly a rule of God’s government as any law of Nature which has been discovered by experience and embodied in science. And instead of wondering that prayer is answered, we would come to look out for and expect answers! Some of you good people who have been known to pray for your children to be converted, have been not only pleased, which is quite right, but you have been amazed, which is quite wrong, when you have seen the Divine Grace that was in them and heard their profession of faith in Christ! That surprise of yours looks as if you were wonderstruck to find that God was honest and kept His Word, whereas you should take that as a matter of course. But as this is so reliable, “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him,” when you do not get an answer to prayer, you should go to the Lord with this question, “Show me why You contend with me. What is it that hinders the blessing? Why do You withhold it? Is my prayer faulty? Or did I ask amiss? Or have I a wrong intent? Or did I not plead the blood of Jesus enough? Or is it that I am altogether unfit to receive such a blessing? Whichever it may be, Lord, set me right, that I may pray, again, and have given to me the answer to my prayer.” You ought to get an answer and will get an answer because it is a part of the rule of God’s government!  
It should be enough for every Believer to know that his prayer will be heard because he has God’s word for it. Why raise objections or multiply arguments? We have it before us. “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.” It is no longer a matter of conjecture! God has said He will, and “let God be true and every man a liar.” Settle it for certain, that what God has promised, He can perform—and He will perform!  
Has not God always answered prayer? In looking back throughout the history of the saints, this seems to be their constant testimony, “This poor man cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him.” He has heard them in strange places—Jonah, to wit, in the whale’s belly! He has delivered them, in answer to prayer, out of very difficult positions—Peter, to wit, when sleeping with four soldiers to be his guard—and yet brought out of prison in answer to the prayers of God’s Church. He has answered prayer to some of us. We are the living witnesses to this. I have sometimes said to skeptics, “You are Believers in the Baconian philosophy, by which matters are proved by induction—that is to say, certain facts are collated and then an inference is drawn from them. Now, as an honest man, I solemnly declare that I have met with not twenty, but hundreds of facts, facts certain to me, because they concerned myself, in which God has given me what I asked of Him. Who, then, are you, that you should say there is no God? Or who are you that you should say God does not answer prayer when I, as credible as you are, and quite as capable of judging of my own consciousness, and of observing facts as you are, state this and that, and when not only I, but hundreds of others, reliable people, who, if put into the witness box tomorrow, would be accepted by any lawyer as being among the most honorable and trustworthy witnesses in the parish—the very men whom he would like to get on his side of a case—declare that God has answered them? Why are they not to be believed?” Are all the thousands of God’s people to be put down as fools or fanatics, and a few addle-headed infidels to be taken after the estimate of their own conceit, to know everything? Well, when the world is turned upside down, perhaps it may be so, but as long as things stand as they are and plain evidence carries its weight with impartial jurymen, we shall hold to what we know, and testify to what we have seen! God does hear! He has heard me! He changes not! You may rest assured that if you call upon Him, He will answer you.  
Our God compares Himself constantly in Scripture to a Father. “If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? “You do not let our children cry to you for things which you have promised them, and then refuse them. Of course, if they take whims into their heads they may take them out again. And if they like to cry for that which is not good for them, they may cry till they are tired. But if they ask for that which you have promised to give them, you give them according to their desire. Are you better than your Father in Heaven? I think not. He condescends to represent Himself as a Friend. Surely one friend will give to another who has need. Is Christ such a poor Friend as to deny us our repeated and importunate prayers? He calls Himself a Husband. You who have a tender husband’s heart would not refuse to your bride, your spouse, anything that would give her joy that it was in your power to bestow. You know you would not. And do you think that the Husband of the Church will let her cry to Him and refuse her? Oh, no! He is a model of a husband in the love He has, and He will be a model in the generosity with which He proves His love. “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.” The relationships of Father, Friend and Husband, all go to prove that an answer shall and will come!  
Were the duty of prayer enjoined, and no promise of answer vouchsafed, of what use would it be? Has God enjoined upon us constantly a useless observance, and perpetually commanded us to abide in the practice of an unmeaning service? He says, “Continue in prayer.” “Pray without ceasing.” Does God delude us and send us to an exercise which can by no possibility be profitable? God forbid! We pray because He leads us and He bids us because there is an end to be answered by it. Therefore, an answer will come!  
If God does not answer prayer, to what purpose is the Holy Spirit given to us to make intercession for us? It were blasphemy to suppose the Holy Spirit doing a work of supererogation. Prayer is necessary and as we know not what to pray for as we ought, the Holy Spirit condescendingly comes to fulfill a useful office in helping our infirmities and assisting us to pray.  
Were there no answers to prayer, to what end would be the Mercy Seat? It was the central part of the Jewish worship, the most mysterious of all their religious furniture—the Ark overshadowed by the cherubim— the Mercy Seat, which covered the Law and concealed the sacred things. In symbol, or in spirit, the Scripture teaches us it is a great privilege to be allowed to come to that Mercy Seat. Christ has died to rend the veil, has sprinkled His own heart’s blood to make it possible for us to approach without our being struck down for our presumption as Nadab and Abihu were. And is all this for nothing? Never tolerate such a thought for a single moment! Ah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, there is a wonderful reality in prayer. I am afraid that some professors have not proved it and those of us who really do know its power do not use it as we should. If a man could have, somewhere in his house, some little secret spring which, but to touch it, would bring him all he needed—which could shake the world, which could move Heaven, which could stop the sun and moon if necessary—would you not think him insane if he never put his finger on that spring, but let it lie idle by him? The insanity is our own! We may move the arm of God if we will. There is nothing in earth or Heaven that we may not have, if it is really good for us, if we do but know how to be importunate with God in prayer for it—and yet we do not pray as if we believed in its efficacy! Do you not often find yourselves hurrying through your prayer and then going away without ever getting near to God? Depend upon it, there is not one more ounce of prayer in the world than there is of real dealing with God. That is the measure of prayer. Unless you draw near to God and speak with Him, you may use the best language, you may think yourselves in the most devout frame, but you have not prayed at all! It is getting the grip, spiritually, laying hold upon Him who is invisible, talking with Him as a man talks with his friend, ordering your cause with arguments and then feeling, “I have really asked this of the great invisible God, who has promised to give it, and I expect it! I must look out for it, it will surely come—as sure as God is God, He will keep His promise—and as He has made me call upon Him, He, Himself, will answer me!” This is the essence of true prayer.  
Do I hear somebody saying, “But there are persons who really pray, or who think they do, but who do not get an answer.” That is quite true, for there are a great many persons who do formally pray, and do not truly pray. They offer a dead prayer—there is no life in it. The heart is not at work, there is no faith, there is no communion! Now, if a man will obtain of God, he must ask in faith, nothing wavering. How can he that doubts, expect that he shall be heard? I must believe, if I come to God, that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him! And if I will not so believe, in vain do I expect to be answered!

But, Brothers and Sisters, do not suppose that prayer will be answered in every case according to the impulse of the suppliant, or that God will give us just whatever we like to pray for. No more dangerous power could be committed to mortals! If the Lord would say to me, “I will give you whatever you wish for,” I should tremble at the responsibility! Infinite knowledge, alone, could regulate unlimited choice. It were a prerogative not to be entrusted to any but God! Only suppose what would occur if every prayer that everybody offers were to be answered. It is pretty certain no child of God would ever resign his creature life. There would be sure to be something or other that would prompt each one to live. We should have all the aged men who lived in the days of David still here, as spectators, if not as competitors in this world’s struggles. I think, too, it is very likely that none of us would ever have any trials. We would be sure to pray not to have them and then there would be no room for faith to be exercised and no room for God to be glorified! The world would come to a dreadful pass if men were entrusted with an absolute power to have whatever they liked! It would be, indeed, a terrible curse for any man to be put in possession of such a faculty as that! You have no right to ask of God what He has not promised. Somebody prayed the other day that he might be led to ask a person to give him 500 pounds. He was so led, or he said he was, and he asked me to do it! All I could say was that whenever I was “led” to do it, I would do it, but just then I was not led. Another person was led to pray that I might build him a cottage. Well, I was not led. A young man was once led, in answer to prayer, to ask me to let him preach for me at the Tabernacle. I was obliged to tell him, also, that when I had had it revealed to me, as it had been to him, I would then cheerfully obey the revelation, but it was lop-sided as yet, and had only been revealed to one person, and not to the other! Such fanaticism surely grows up where you get the idea that God will give you anything you ask for. He will do no such thing! He will give you what He has promised to give you, and if in His Word, He has promised to bestow it, you have but to ask in faith and He will be as good as His Word! Hold to that. If it is not a promised blessing in some form or other, you have neither the right to ask for it, nor the right to accept it!  
Should any man say, “I asked for a blessing that was plainly promised, but did not obtain it,” I should then say, Are you equally clear that the obtaining of it would be for your good? “Yes,” you say, “it would make me comfortable.” Just so, but is it for your good to be comfortable? “And it would get me out of my difficulty.” But may it not be for your lasting good to be in the difficulty, and may there not be something in the world a great deal higher for you and for me than merely to be comfortable and to get out of difficulties? “Not as I will, but as You will,” was the prayer of the Man who had more power in prayer than all of us put together—“Not as I will, but as You will.” We must always put that in. God does not give up His prerogative as King when He bids us pray and promises us to answer. He still holds everything in His own hands. You say to your child, “My Dear, I will give you anything that is for your good.” He asks you to let him have his father’s razors to play with. You know that very soon he will be cutting himself, and you say, “No, my Child, that is preposterous.” Or he asks you to let him have those sweets that are poisonous and you say, “No, my dear Child, I have no doubt they taste sweet to your palate, but think of the bitter medicines you would have to take afterwards, and of how much mischief they would do you. No, I cannot let you have those.” So it is with our God. He denies us many things we wish for because they are not good for us. But there is one thing that is certain—“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” If it is really good for you, you shall have it and God shall be glorified by it!  
To sum up all I have been saying tonight, I want, dear Friends, these two promises to stand vividly set forth before your eyes—“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.” I want to stir you up to prayer. Do let us have more prayer during this year than we have ever had. It has been by prayer that we have been established up till now. When we were very few at Park Street, before I had the pleasure of knowing the most of you, among the best signs of the coming blessing was your numerouslyattended Prayer Meetings. We had a little vestry there and I think we tried it about twice but it was no use—we could not get in, but we must needs go into the Chapel. Oh, there were prayers there that have been turned into answers since! There were many times when we could not speak because we felt so much of the Presence of God that we had need to sit still and pour out in tears and sobs the groans that could not be uttered. We did pray with real, mighty, prevailing prayer—and then there came a blessing. Wherever we went, God was with us! Wherever the Word was preached—whether in Exeter Hall or the Surrey Music-Hall—it mattered not in what place—the Word was blessed! And though I am sometimes afraid that we shall get slack in prayer, yet when I frequently see the whole of this basement full, and see you sitting in the aisles on Monday evening (though some careless people say, “Oh, it is only a Prayer Meeting!”), it does cheer and make glad my heart. We cannot lose the blessing while we keep the spirit of prayer! I want you to pray still more. Among other topics, I suggest to you much more prayer for your children and for your families. We must have them saved, Beloved. We cannot bear it that our children should be cast away! The angel said to Lot, “Have you here any beside?” I say that to each of you tonight. Have you in London any beside? You have seen some saved—are there any left? Is there one left? Oh, Father, never cease to pray till that one child is brought to God! Let your prayers go up perpetually, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!” When you have done with your families, pray for your neighbors. You need never be short of objects for petition in this great city which is so full of sin! In these times of poverty and distress, men, perhaps, are more easily reached than they ever were. Let us pray more for them and may the Eternal God soften them in their distress and bring them to Himself. I claim myself to have a very special right to the prayers of some here. I think I have a right to the prayers of all the members of this Church, but on some of you in particular I have a claim which none can dispute, for it has been through the Word preached here that you have been brought from darkness to the Light of God, and I charge you, my children in Christ, by the love which I trust subsists in your hearts, never forget me in your prayers! You know not how much I need it. It is not possible for any but God to know how much I need the daily prayers of the Lord’s people! Others of you are members of other churches. Well, pray for your ministers and pray for us all. The weakest of us will be strong when you pray! The strongest will grow weak when you flag. Brothers and Sisters, pray for us that we may be faithful, earnest, useful! And we say, as you shall pray for us, so may God help you in that day when you shall draw near unto Him for yourselves in distress. Pray for all your fellow Church members. Pray for the backsliding, pray for any that are faltering, pray, I beseech you, for our work connected with the Church here. I ask your prayers for our college, in particular, that our Brothers who are going out to preach the Gospel may go as Godsent servants, having their feet winged with love and their souls fired with zeal!  
Again and again, and again would I say it! If I should never say another word to you, I think I would conclude by saying. Brothers and Sisters, pray for us! Pray for yourselves and your families and your neighbors! “Continue in prayer.” “Watch and pray.” Watch continually, but pray, also, and the Lord hear you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 5:41-48; 6:1-8.**

Verse 41. And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. If you can do him any service, do it cheerfully, do it readily. Do what he wants of you.

42. Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you, turn not away. This is the spirit of the Christian—to live with the view of doing service.

43-46. You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That you may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love them who love you, what reward have you? You have done what anybody would do.

46-48. Do not even the publicans do the same? And if you salute your brethren, only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans do so? Be you, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect. Rise out of ordinary manhood. Get beyond what others might expect of you. Have a high standard. “Be you, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect.”

**MATTHEW 6:1-8.**  
Verse 1. Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in Heaven. Our blessed Lord does not tell His disciples to give alms, but He takes it for granted that they do. How could they be His disciples if they did not do so? But He tells them to take care that they do not do this in order to get honor and credit from it. Oh, how much is done in this world that would be very good, but it is spoiled in the doing through the motive done to be seen of men! “You have no reward from your Father who is in Heaven.”

2. Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. So that they will never have another! They have been paid once for it by the approbation of their fellow men. They will never have any further reward.

3-5. But when you do alms let not your left hand know what your right hand does: that your alms may be in secret: and your Father who sees in secret, Himself, shall reward you openly. And when you pray—He does not tell His disciples to pray, but again takes it for granted that they do— and he cannot be a Christian who does not pray. “A prayerless soul is a Christless soul.” “When you pray”—

5. You shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. All they will ever get. People say, “What a wonderfully pious man he is to pray up at the street corner.” Yes, but that is the reward. The prayer will die where it was offered.

6. But you, when you pray, enter into your closet. Get into some quiet nook—some secret place—no matter where.  
6. And when you have shut your door—So that nobody can hear you— not wishing anybody to know even that you are at prayer. “When you have shut your door.”—  
6-8. Pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret, shall reward you openly. And when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not you therefore like unto they, for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him. Prayers are never measured by the yard in Heaven. They are estimated by their weight. If there is earnestness in them—truth, sincerity—God accepts them however brief they are. Indeed, brevity is often an excellence in prayer. Let us never, therefore, use vain repetitions.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1297 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MY GOD  
NO. 1297

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 30, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My God.”  
Psalm 91:2.**

IF YOU were to find honey in a tree and should wish to give some of it to your friends, I can imagine you cautiously taking it up in your hands, carrying it very carefully—and yet, when you reached the company, you would find, to your sorrow, a large part of it would have oozed out between your fingers—so that you had failed to convey to others what was so delicious to yourself. I fear I shall be in the same condition when this sermon is done and, therefore, I am the more eager to assure you at the beginning that the honey which I wish you to partake of is, indeed, of the very richest kind! My text has been, to my own heart, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb!

Have you ever been in the Alps, or in some other region where the scenery is peculiarly impressive? And has there happened a singular conjunction of sun and cloud, of brightness and shadow which has made the view before you to be transcendently sublime, or surpassingly beautiful? If so, when you have reached your companions, you have tried to tell them what you have seen, but in proportion as the scene has been exquisite and charming, you have been conscious of your inability to convey to them any satisfactory idea of the spectacle. If it had been a commonplace affair you could have accomplished the description and conveyed your impression of it to other minds.

But because of its being so altogether superior and out of the common way, you have failed, after the most earnest endeavors, to succeed, and you have exclaimed, “Ah, you should have been there, yourselves! Had you seen with your own eyes, you would then have understood my descriptions. But now the task of description is hopeless. Had you been there you would have known that I do not exaggerate! On the contrary, you would have felt that when I had spoken under the greatest excitement, I fell far short of the admiration which the scene awakens.”

It happens to me in happy hours that a text of Scripture becomes peculiarly delicious to my heart, even as marrow and fatness to the feaster— and these two words have been so. They filled my spirit with sweetness even to the fullest! But I fear that I cannot convey that sweetness to you. I have seen, in these two words, such a wonderful display of Divine condescension, of the Lord’s favor to His chosen, and of the intense delight which springs out of that condescension and favor that had I but been in the pulpit at the time, I could have preached with freedom, but now I do not find it so easy. Expression limps today where enjoyment leaped yesterday!

However, may God the Holy Spirit help you to see in the text what I have seen in it, even if I cannot point it out to you! And then our meditation will be remarkably delightful and profitable to us. May the Spirit of God bring fullness of meaning out of the text to your understanding and to your hearts. And may we all rejoice together as we go out of this Tabernacle, each one of us saying, “The Lord is my portion, said my soul.”

I. First let us think of these TWO WORDS TOGETHER. And to get at them, let us see when they have occurred in sacred history. Let us consider some of the more remarkable and special occasions upon which children of God have used these two words together and have said, “My God.” First, this is the young convert’s early confession. The first instance we will give is Ruth, who lovingly said to Naomi, “Where you dwell I will dwell: where you go I will go: where you lodge I will lodge: your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”

That last resolution was the avowal of a spiritual change. She might have been determined to lodge and to abide with her mother-in-law and there would have been but little in it. But when it came to this—“Your God shall be my God,” then there was hope that she had been delivered by the Grace of God from the bondage of idolatry and had come to put her trust under the wings of Jehovah, the living God! Ah, dear young converts, if the Lord has revealed your sinful state to you and has led you to Jesus Christ to find life and salvation, you will come forward and give yourself to the Lord and declare, “I will be Your servant, for You are my God.”—

*“Lord, You are mine, forever mine,  
My heart is filled with joy Divine!  
Henceforth You shall my treasure be,  
And I will find my all in Thee.”*

You will next give yourself to the Church according to the will of God and you will tell the Church that you do so because from now on the God of the Church and the God of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be your God. You mean to dwell with the Lord’s people and live and die with them, for their God is your God. Some of you have lately been converted, or profess to have been so. I trust your profession is thoroughly truthful, but be sure you examine yourselves. Have you taken God to be your God? Not to be a mere name to you, nor as a sacred word to sing about and pray about— but as truly God to you? Is God, in very deed, your God? If He is, He will rule your soul, He will dominate your whole spirit and sway His scepter over your whole heart.

No man is truly converted until God takes His right place in relationship to him. The wicked forget God. The men of Belial defy God. The infidel denies God, but the child of God acknowledges God, submits to His authority and gives Him the throne of his heart. He does not give the Lord a secondary place and permit self to be first, for that would be to deify self and insult the Lord! He makes God to be God, that is first and sole in authority and power! This is a sure index of true conversion—when God is God in your soul. As I have already said, God is not God to a great many—He is but a name and nothing more to them. But when He becomes God and it is a great word, that—when He takes the place which the Creator, the Redeemer, the God should occupy—then is the soul converted, indeed!

Now, whether we were converted yesterday, or have known the Lord for 20, 30, or 40 years, I trust we can address our mother, the Church, and say as Ruth said to Naomi, “Where you lodge I will lodge: your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” These words, in the next place, may be regarded as the statement of the Christian’s belief—I mean, here, not merely his first confession of it, but his later statement of it. Here is our creed and our confession of faith! Take Thomas for the illustration. He has been very skeptical. Poor Thomas! He seems to have had too much brain and too little heart. He was always for fighting his way through intricate questions and for answering tough objections. If her were alive, now, if the Grace of God had not improved him, he would have been a “modern thought” Divine, a critical Brother suggesting more problems than all the rest of us could solve!

He must have tokens, marks and evidences, or else he will not believe! But he is highly indulged and the Savior permits him to put his finger into the prints of the nails and his hand into His side! And when he has done so, Thomas, by a strange but blessed logic infers the Deity of Christ from His wounds! He was the first, I believe, who had ever done so, but certainly not the last. And having, from the very wounds of his Lord’s body inspected His Deity, Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” In this plain, decided testimony to our Lord’s Divinity, we all unite! It is the heartfelt confession of faith of every Christian in reference to the Lord Jesus! There is no room for two opinions on that point!

If there are any professing Christians in this world who do not call Christ, their God—well, Brothers and Sisters, we are sorry for them and pray the Lord to give them spiritual life and light. But as for us, the Man who bled on Calvary is “very God of very God” to us, and that in the broadest and deepest sense. As the angels bow before Him, so, also, do we! We count Him “worthy to receive Divine honor and power.” There are many differences of opinion in the Church of God which may be tolerated, but this is beyond all controversy and can never be a moot point! Here our protests against error must be firm and unmistakable.

I admired a remark that was once very merrily made by good William Gadsby when a Unitarian chapel had been erected near a Baptist place of worship. The story has been told to me that someone in the vestry was greatly mourning over the circumstance and saying what a sad opposition it was. Gadsby said, “Well, man, I do not see any opposition in it.” “But surely it is a great opposition, Mr. Gadsby. They deny the Deity of Christ.” “Why, man,” said Gadsby, “that is no opposition! Suppose you kept a baker’s shop and sold good bread, and a man came and opened an ironmonger’s shop opposite, would you call that an opposition? Certainly not, it is a different line altogether.”

And so it is. Where we preach the Deity of Christ, that is one line of things. But where that is denied, we cannot regard it as another form of Christianity! It is a different thing, altogether, quite as different as iron would be from bread. The Socinian is nearer akin to the Mohammedan than to the Christian. He who does not acknowledge the Deity of Jesus

disowns Him altogether. I cannot see how Jesus Christ can be anything but one of two things—either the Son of God or else a gross impostor who allowed his disciples to think him Divine—and used the virtues of his character to support his claim. All the worse an impostor because he had a fine moral sense and yet employed even virtue’s self to aid his blasphemous ambition. He must have been either God or an arch-deceiver!

Brothers and Sisters, we will have no mincing of matters about that point! Charity is all very well, but the Truth of God comes first. “First pure, then peaceable,” is a good barometer for our judgment on such points. On the matter of our Lord’s Godhead we cannot, for an instant, hesitate—we do not merely believe Jesus Christ to be God, but we risk our eternal future upon that Truth of God! I am a lost man, I know, and for me there can be nothing but eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord if the Savior, Jesus Christ, is not Divine! But He is Divine! This we will maintain in the teeth of all men as our confession of faith—Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest, very God of very God, is my Lord and my God. Thus, my God is the first and last confession of faith of those who are under the New Covenant. It is the utterance, both of the babe in Grace, and of the more advanced Christian.

Furthermore, my Brothers and Sisters, the words, “My God,” have often been used to declare the determination of the Believer when he has been surrounded by opponents and persecutors. Grandly did old Micaiah use this expression when the false priests were round about him! Prophets who pretended to be inspired delivered their oracles and old Micaiah said, “As the Lord my God lives. Whatever my God says unto me that will I speak.” Neither less nor more did he speak, because he believed in Jehovah as being his God and submitted himself entirely to Jehovah’s sway. The false priests worshipped Baal, Moloch and Ashtaroth—but old Micaiah cared not what they worshipped—he knew who was his God and he avowed his God to their teeth.

O, you who call yourselves the people of God, be always ready to stand up for Jehovah in whatever company you may be, for there are many gods and many lords in our land at this time—and multitudes of professed Christians have turned aside from worshipping the God of Israel! They have set up new gods and the Eternal is despised. The Old Testament, they tell us, is an uncouth and harsh Revelation! The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not at all the God of their fancy, for He is too terrible, too severe, too righteous, too just! They want a milder, gentler God and they pretend that Jesus Christ has revealed quite a different Deity from the God of the Old Testament. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, in this they greatly error, for the Lord changes not and is the same today under the Gospel as He was yesterday under the Law!

We believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, “the God of the whole earth shall He be called.” We worship the God of Israel, the God who made the heavens and the earth, the God who divided the Red Sea, the God who spoke in thunder from Sinai! We believe that Jesus Christ has not come to reveal to us a new Deity, but to declare unto us the God who is from the beginning! Ours is the song of Zacharias—“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spoke by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began.” “This God is our God forever and ever! He shall be our guide even unto death.”—

*“The God of Abraham’s praise is  
Who reigns enthroned above,  
Ancient of everlasting days,  
And God of love!  
Jehovah, Great I AM!  
By earth and Heaven confessed,  
I bow, and bless  
Your sacred name,  
Forever blest!”*

The words, “my God,” may well express the secret vow of the Believer as he consecrates himself to the Most High—of this we have an instance in the life of Jacob. He said, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God.” We have each said that, I hope, many times, when we have renewed our vows unto the Lord. Though we have known the Lord for 20 or 30 years, yet, as we have needed Him anew in time of trouble, or as He has revealed Himself to us afresh in a way of deliverance, we have laid hold upon Him by faith, over and over again, and said, “Yes, He is my God.”

Have you ever felt your heart full to overflowing while thinking over such a text as this, “My Beloved is mine and I am His”? I do not know a more delightful contemplation for a quiet hour alone than to weigh each syllable of that promise, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Look it over, turn it over, taste it, feed on it, digest it and see the mutual possession, even as in those other texts, “The Lord’s portion is His people,” and, “The Lord is my portion, said my soul.” Christ is ours and we are Christ’s! You cannot, dear Friend, do better than oftentimes hand over, again, the title deeds of your soul to God, yes, not of your soul, only, but of everything you have! For if you make an inventory of all you have to the last penny, it is your Lord’s. Even so is the Lord altogether yours and you should often renew your grasp of Him. Take Him to be your only Lord and God as long as you live and, while others boast in their treasures, be it your joy to cry, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon the earth that I desire besides You!” Thus with two words, “My God,” we avow our faith both in the presence of our enemies and before our Lord, Himself.

But I cannot linger here. I must have you notice, next, that these words, “My God,” have sometimes afforded the deepest possible comfort to children of God in times of terrible trouble. When our dear Lord and Master was in His greatest woe—when all the waves and billows of Judgment were going over His soul—the exclamation which came from Him at the climax of His grief was, “My God! My God.” True, it was attended with the question, “Why have You forsaken Me?” but still, as with a two-handed grip, He seemed to get a hold of God when He said, “My God! My God!”

Driven to extremity, He settled His heart on that one point. There was the anchor hold of His hope, “My God, My God.”

He did not say, “My disciples.” They had all forsaken Him. He could not call on His mother and siblings—they were powerless to console. No arm, angelic or human, could minister to His aid. He was alone in the grasp of Death, unsupported and unsustained, forsaken of earth and Heaven, and left a prey to the powers of darkness, but this—this was the cry which kept Him alive and gave Him strength to bear, even to the end! “My God,” He said, “they have not robbed Me of You! My God, I will still appeal to You! Though You hide Your face and seem to forsake Me, yet I know You are still Mine and I hold fast to You to the end! My God! My God!”

You will never have to use those words in so dire an extremity of woe! But if you ever come into deep waters, may you have Grace to say, “My God,” for if you do, you will soon be enabled to shout, “It is finished.” “My God,” is a love note in days of peace and a war cry for hours of battle! It is mighty in times of joy, but it is still more potent in nights of sorrow. The man who can say, “My God,” is a match for Death and Hell! By that watchword he shall master sin and overthrow all the hosts of the world, the flesh and the devil. In this sign you may conquer! The watchword of victory is, “My God.”

Once more. Those words have been heard in cases precisely the opposite of deep distress. When very marvelous deliverances have been enjoyed, the expression, “My God” has frequently come from the lips of those who have experienced them. When Miriam took her timbrel and went forth in the dance because God had overthrown Pharaoh and his hosts, she sang a song which Moses had composed for her. And you will remember that one of the verses was—“He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” She had never reached that point, “He is my God,” until Pharaoh’s hosts and his chosen captains had been drowned in the Red Sea—then she felt proud that she had such a God—and her faith exulted as she beheld His arm made bare!

Think, also, of Daniel and that happy moment when he exultingly called Jehovah his God. When the Prophet had been all night in the lion’s den, Darius comes, and with a plaintive cry he asks if Daniel yet lives. He is afraid the lions have devoured him. Do you notice Daniel’s answer? He says, “My God has sent His angel and has shut the lions’ mouths.” You do not wonder that he said, “My God,” do you? I do not think he could have coolly said, “God—God has sent His angel.” He could not have spoken so coldly! The deliverance he had experienced, the great goodness of God in keeping him alive that night in the lions’ den, made him feel that he must, with arms of love and faith, embrace the Omnipotent Preserver and call Him, “My God.”

Beloved, if you have experienced joyous deliverances of the same order, you have learned to say, “My God.” If you have seen your sins drowned in the Red Sea, you have said, “My God.” And if the lions have been chained and you have escaped their jaws, you, too, have said, “My God.” I earnestly hope that if the trouble which has now come upon you should prove to be sharper and more grievous than any before, it may turn out to have been sent in order that you may say, “My God,” with a deeper emphasis, and feel your soul more fully filled with the blessed meaning of those two matchless monosyllables!

So much, then, about the times when these words have been used. May the Spirit of God lead us to those specialties of experience in the midst of which these words shall become the frequent language of our hearts.

II. Briefly let us notice, in the second place, what this FIRST WORD, “MY”—“MY God,” means. In what sense and respects can God be mine? He fills Heaven and earth—can I call Him mine? “His tender mercies are over all His works.” I cannot set a hedge around His benevolence, or claim a monopoly of His compassion, can I? How, then, can I call Him mine? He is so inconceivable! He is boundless in Nature! His every attribute is Infinite! A man may call a province his own, for if it is within his compass, he can travel over it, or sail round it.

An emperor may call thousands of square miles his own, but still, the eagle’s pinion or the dove’s light wing can soar from boundary to boundary of his empire! The broadest dominion may be mapped and measured. But how can I call that mine which I cannot even conceive? If my thought cannot compass it, shall my heart possess it? Yes, yes, so the text says! “My God.” Love possesses what reason cannot even look upon! Still, what does this mean, this daring appropriation? Why, it must mean, this, among other things—first, that I acknowledge Him to be my God. Whatever gods others may have, Jehovah is God to me! To whomever Jehovah may be a name, he is God to me, and, as Father, Son and Spirit, three Persons in one blessed Unity, I adore Him!

He may be despised and rejected. There may be other names set up in competition with Him, but to me—to me—He is the only God! I wish that you in this assembly may all say at once, most heartily and distinctly— “Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” I hope you will avow yourselves, this day, to be His people and take the God of Israel, the God and Father of your Lord Jesus Christ, to be your God! That is a part of the meaning. There is an acknowledging the Lord to be our God.

But, next, the words imply a personal recognition of Him. Venus and Jupiter and Bacchus—those ancient deities of Greece and Rome—we have all talked about them as myths and fictions. But as actual gods we ignore them—they are no gods to us! Some of us read classical books in our boyhood. I am sure they have done us more harm than good, but we have read them and, therefore, we know all about the imaginary history and doings of those most disgusting gods and goddesses. But we are very well aware that they are dreams and falsehoods—we know no such beings— they are nothing to us! We have heard, also, of Juggernauts, and of the thousands and millions of gods of the Hindus, but we have no acquaintance with them.

I have felt thankful when I have seen likenesses of Krishna and Siva, that they were no relations of mine! There is one god with an elephant’s head and another god with a cat’s head. I am delighted to think that I was never on speaking terms with such monsters and could never call them

mine! If they are gods to others they are not so to us—we know them not, their names we despise—and their pretensions we detest. But, Brothers and Sisters, we know our God! It is true we have not seen Him at any time. “You saw no similitude,” said He, when He spoke to His people from the top of Sinai. We have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. Yet as spirits speak to spirits we have been cognizant of the action of the Spirit of God upon our spirits!

You and I know that we have often been moved by one another’s spirits. This very night, while I am speaking, my spirit is known of your spirit, and you are recognizing my spirit while I speak. In much the same way the Holy Spirit, by His mysterious operations, has come into contact with our spirits so that though we know Him not by sight, hearing, taste, or smell—all of which deceive us—yet we recognize Him by an inner and Infallible sense which was created in us at our regeneration by the hand of God! That there is a God we know by spiritual perception. He has opened our ears so that we hear His voice. He has given us new sight by which we perceive Him and are even more assured of His Presence than we could be if we had the evidence of our eyes and ears!

He is not a God in cloudland to us, He is intensely real and true! He is a God with whom we speak. He is a God who calls Himself our Friend, our Father—a God who invites us to come and reason with Him—a God who assures us of the love of His heart! He is a God who tells us His secrets, for, “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” O men of the world, we are as sure of the existence of God and of His being ours as ever you can be sure of your gold or your lands! And we are as truly acquainted with Him as you are with your friends! Therefore it is that He is no longer simply God to me, but He is “My God.”

Just as when I know a man by familiar communion, he is not merely a friend, but he is, “my friend,” so has it come to pass between God and us and by each Believer, He is fitly styled, “My God.” I hope the matter has proceeded further than that. We not merely know that He is God and have not only recognized His Divine existence, but we have come into a relationship with Him. There is a natural and necessary relationship between God and His creatures, but it is not always recognized. When it is discerned by the soul, because the Spirit of God illuminates the heart, man rises into a new relationship to God and feels as he never felt before. For instance, he comes into the relationship of a pardoned child. Oh, if you have ever been forgiven, you will know Him that forgave you, and you will say, “My God.”

If you feel the Spirit of adoption, now, within your heart, you will know who adopted you and you will cry, “My God, my Father.” You receive of His bounty according to the gift of His Grace from day to day and, therefore, while consciously receiving abundant mercies from the Lord, you learn to say, “My God will supply all my needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” The heart of the matter lies in this—“My God” means that we have appropriated Him to ourselves. We take Him by a daring act of faith to be, from now on, God to us, and all that He is we take to be ours forever and ever!

May we do this? Brothers and Sisters, may we do this? Ah, yes, appropriating faith is warranted in the Covenant, for the Covenant runs thus, “I will be their God and they shall be My people.” It is justified, also, by the act of God, for did He not give His Son? And when He gave His Son to redeem us, could He withhold anything from us? Did He not, in that act, virtually give us Himself, for Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Him—and He that has received Jesus has received the Father! Say, “My Savior,” and you need not be afraid to say, “My God”! Moreover, not merely does the Covenant guarantee it and the act of God justify it, but there is the witness of the Spirit within us which has taught us our right to say, “My God.”

When we have said unto the Lord, “You are my God,” the Holy Spirit has not chided us, nor smitten our conscience, nor rebuked us for presumption, nor humbled us for pride on that account! But, on the contrary, peace has followed—calm rest, holy joy, quiet trustfulness and assured confidence—all of which are the true fruits of saying, “My God,” and at the same time the genuine works of the Spirit of God. Thus we know that we have not erred when we have made this claim. Moreover, dear Friends, we may expect our confidence and assured appropriation to become stronger and stronger as life goes on. We have not been wrong in saying, “My God,” for we have grown into saying it more and more in proportion as the Lord has sanctified us.

As we conquer sin, we say, “My God,” more assuredly, and as we grow in Grace we say, “My God,” with greater confidence. Therefore it cannot be wrong. We expect, in Heaven, to say, “My God,” still more positively. Beloved, how boldly we shall say it there! No sin, no doubts, no clouds to divide us from Him! Then shall we know that the Infinite Jehovah is ours to enjoy forever and ever! Oh, it is not crowns of gold, it is not music of sweetest harps, it is not palm branches or white robes of victory that our souls will most delight themselves in—we shall triumph in “God our exceeding joy!” “At His right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

We shall, in Heaven, always find it bliss to say to ourselves, “God is mine.” What God does is great, what God has is great, but what God is, is far more than what He does or has, because He can do and have infinitely more than He ever has done or has created! Yet it is God, Himself, and what He is which is ours forever! In grasping the Lord by faith and saying, “He is mine,” what a sweep the soul has made! It has, as it were, encompassed eternity, set its own seal upon infinity and appropriated all sufficiency!

III. Finally, let us spend two or three minutes upon the LAST WORD— “My GOD.” “GOD! What does it mean? Ah, now, you have asked me a question which I cannot answer! The wise man was asked, “What is God?” And he requested that he might have a day to consider his answer. When the sun had set, he said that he must have three days, for in thinking of it, the subject grew. They gave him three days and when these were over he demanded six days more, for the subject was greater than ever. When they called upon him at the six days’ end, he claimed 12 days more, for

the subject was still beyond him. They bade him take the 12 days and they would hear the result of his thoughts. The next time he said that he must have a month, and, at the month’s end, he gave them no information, but assured them he must have a year. When the year was over he confessed that he should need a lifetime—he should never be able to tell them what God was so long as he lived!

There is no defining the Incomprehensible One! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, you and I can call Him, “My God.” Let us reflect upon His being ours as to His Nature, His Person, His Essence. There is Father, Son and Holy Spirit—Three in One. Then the Father is my God—He has loved me, He has chosen me, He has begotten me, He has provided for me—He is my Father, my All. Then, too, the adorable Son is mine—Jesus, the Redeemer, the Prophet, Priest and King. The Intercessor, the Judge—He is mine. Then the Holy Spirit is mine—the Instructor, the Quickener, the Sanctifier, the Comforter. Dew, fire, wind, dove—whatever the metaphor under which He veils Himself—He is mine. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit— to these beloved and glorious of the one undivided Godhead, Faith says, “My God.”

When I have thought of the blessed Persons, let me think of His attributes. Omniscience is mine—the Lord knows everything for me. Omnipotence is mine—He will do everything for me. Justice is mine, reconciled to me by the death of Jesus. Mercy is mine, enduring forever. Truth is mine—He will keep His promise. Immutability is mine—He changes not and, therefore, I am not consumed. Rehearse all the attributes peculiar to the Divine Nature and say unto the Lord, “You are my God and therefore all Your blessed perfections and glorious attributes are mine.” Think of Him, again, in what He has done, as well as in what He is. As Creator He is my Creator—not merely as creating me, but as making “all things” for me—that I may richly enjoy them.

Whatever I look upon I may enjoy because He made it. He has made all things holy and the curse which sin engendered He has removed through the death of His Son. And now, as I traverse the world, I may delight myself in the works of the Creator and say, “These are Your glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty. And You give them to me that I may see You in them and enjoy them to Your honor.” The Lord is also our Redeemer and the Believer calls Him, “my Redeemer,” and, “my God.” It was my God that poured out His life unto death upon the bloody tree. My God has loved me and given Himself for me. The Lord is, moreover, the Sanctifier. He carries on the work of Grace in the soul and in this He is my God. He is the God of Providence and rules all things according to His will—and in that Character He is my God.

The Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the world—and Heaven and earth shall pass away before the Glory of His face. But He that shall make Heaven rock and reel is my God—and He that shall make the rocks run like rivers and the stars fall like withered leaves from the tree is my God, the God of my salvation! Oh, is it not blessed to think of God in any light or aspect under which you are able to conceive Him and then be able to say at the end of it all, “He is my God in all His works and in all His relationships, in all His attributes and all His glories”? To me it is the utmost bliss at this moment to claim, with each one of my Brothers and Sisters, that He is my God. Do you know, if you could once say this—and I wish that every man, woman and child in this house, could, from the heart say, “My God”—if you could say this, it would sweeten so many things to you!

This Bible—how you would love this precious Bible, for then you would say, “It is my Book now, because it is my Father’s Book—my God’s Book.” You would value every line of it! There would be a new sweetness in every single verse because it is your Father’s handwriting, inspired by His own Spirit—that Spirit which belongs to you and it tells you of your own Savior—the Savior who loves you and who gave Himself for you. If you could call God your own, you would love the Sabbath supremely, because you would say, “It is my day because it is the Lord’s day—the day of my risen Savior. He has taken it to Himself and enclosed its hours for His own— and from now on I prize its earliest and its latest moments because they are His.”

A sense of the Lord’s being yours would make you love His people, too. When I first came to London from the village where I formerly preached, I was very glad to see anybody who came from that region. And if I had seen a dog wag its tail that I had once seen in that village I should have been pleased! I should have loved anybody for the sake of the dear old place and, surely, when you can say, “My God,” you love all the Lord’s people! Many a young Christian has been deceived by hypocrites because of his love to Christians—and that love is sometimes ruined by ill deeds. But where there is overflowing love to the Father, there will be affection for the family. Be it ours to show it!

If you see in any man anything that is like Christ, love him for it! If he is not all you would like him to be, remember that you, also, are not all you ought to be. Surely if Jesus Christ loves a man, you should love him, too. Seek your Brothers’ and Sisters’ good and aim at benefiting them because are one of Christ’s members. Love for Christ’s sake all those who can say, “My God.”

I do not know, but I seem to, myself, to have talked away and to have missed my aim and objective altogether, compared with what I have felt while meditating in private upon these dear and blessed words, “My God.” It is a deep well, but the water is cool and sweet if you can draw it up. “My God”—there is more than satisfaction in the words! If you have no money, never mind, you are rich if you can say, “My God.” If the husband is buried. If the children have gone home to Heaven, do not despair, your Maker is your Husband, if you can cry, “My God.” If your friends have forsaken you, if those who ought to have sustained you have been cruel and unkind to you, He changes not, and He bids you call Him, “My God.” If the unkindness of men drives you to say, “My God,” you will be a gainer by it! Anything which weans from earth and weds to Heaven is good!

I saw, yesterday, a park in which they were felling all the trees. And yet there were the poor cranes building on elms that were marked to be cut down. I thought to myself, “You foolish birds, to be building your nests there, for the woodman’s axe is ringing all around and the tall elms are

tumbling to the ground.” We are all apt to build our nests on trees that will be cut down. We get to love the creature and to say, “My this,” and, “My that.” And from this weakness our sharpest sorrows arise. If you build nowhere but on the Tree of Life, which never can be felled—if you build nowhere but on the Rock of Ages which can never crumble— happiness will be yours of a safe and lasting kind. But you can only do this by saying, “My God”!

Now, I dare say there are some unconverted people here who wonder what we are making all this fuss about. They have their own hoarded treasures and cherished possessions. They see no beauty in God that they should desire Him. No, but let me tell you—you who have no God and no Savior—the day will come when you would give your eyes, no, you would give your very lives, if you could say, “My God.” Men have been worth thousands of pounds and when they have lain a-dying without God they have said of their gold, “It will not do!” They have had their moneybags brought to the bed and pressed them to their heart and said, “They will not cheer my soul, they will not calm my spirit.”

If you do not die crying out, “Woe is me that I die without God,” yet, at any rate, after death, when you shall have risen from the dead and you see the Judge—and you stand as a criminal before His bar—you will think yourself ten thousand times ten thousand fools in one that you ever lived and died without God and without Christ! How will infinite anguish rip your heart while you have to confess, “I tried to gain the world, but lost my soul! I am a fool of the worst order! Alas! That I should be such a maniac!”

O Sinner, I wish you would go to Jesus! May God’s Spirit lead you to Jesus tonight! Cry mightily to God that He would give Himself to you through Jesus Christ, the Savior! He will do it, for He waits to be gracious. Try Him! And God bless you all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 37.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—774, 198.  
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SAFE SHELTER  
NO. 902

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust.” Psalm 91:4.

WHAT condescending words! I cannot express the sense I feel of the great loving kindness of the Lord to us in using such a simile to set forth His protecting care of His people. Had any poet suggested the metaphor, we might have recoiled from it as unseemly, or rejected it as profane. It really is so familiar and so homely that unless God Himself had spoken it by the mouth of His Holy Spirit, we might have accounted it impertinent for any human being to have used the comparison. The Lord here compares Himself to a hen covering her brood—and He speaks not only of the wings, which give shelter, but He enters into detail and speaks of the feathers which give warmth and comfort and repose. “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.”

Using thus the maternal instinct as an emblem of His own parental tenderness, God compares Himself to the mother bird which fosters, cherishes and protects her little ones. You have stood, sometimes, in the farmyard and there you have noticed the little chicks as they cowered down under the hen. She has given some note of warning that betokened danger—perhaps

 your very presence discomposed her and made her betray some little fluttering of fear. She called her little ones by her peculiar cry. They came to her and then, stooping down and spreading out her wings, she covered them and they were safe.

You would have noticed that after they were safely nestled there, the warmth of her feathers made them seem peculiarly happy and at ease. You could hear them clucking to one another and playfully pushing one another sometimes out of their places, but evidently cheerful, contented and peaceful. It was something more than the protection which a soldier would give to a comrade—it was the protection of a mother of her young. There was love in it. There was homeliness, relationship, kindliness, heart-working in it all. It was not merely the relief that might supply a little cold comfort, but the breast feathers came down upon the little ones and there they rested cozily and comfortably, serene and unmolested.

Well now, that is precisely the idea that the text teaches. So, at least, I understand it. So, evidently, Dr. Watts thought, when he wrote the wellknown paraphrase—

*“Just as a hen protects her brood,  
From birds of prey that seek their blood,  
Under her feathers, so the Lord  
Makes His own arm His people’s guard.”*

There is even more fullness of meaning than the doctor has compassed. Not only is protection from danger vouchsafed, but a sense of comfort and happiness is communicated, making the child of God feel that he is at home under the shadow of the Almighty. He feels he has all the comforts that he can need when he has once come to cower down under a blessed sense of the Divine Presence and to feel the warm flowing out of the very heart of God, as He reveals Himself in the most tender relationship towards His weak and needy servants.

Carrying this picture in your mind’s eye, may it often cheer and encourage you. Though I have nothing new, no bewitching novelty to introduce to you, I want to bring this old, old Truth of God vividly before your minds, to examine it in detail and press it home to your souls.

I. Let our starting-point be a question—a question of paramount interest—WHEN MAY THIS TEXT BE RELIED UPON BY A BELIEVER? “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.” Well, it may be relied upon in cases of extreme peril. I do not doubt that servants of God, in times of danger at sea, when the huge billows have roared and the tempest has raged and the vessel seemed likely to go to pieces, have often cheered their hearts with such a thought as this. “Now, He that holds the waters in the hollow of His hand will take care of us, and cover us with His feathers and under His wings may we trust.”

Perhaps at this very moment, down in some cabin, or amidst the noise and tumult and the raging of the ocean, when many are alarmed, there are Christians with calm faces, patiently waiting their Father’s will, whether it shall be to reach the port of Heaven, or to be spared to come again to land into the midst of life’s trials and struggles once more. They feel that they are well-cared for. They know that the storm has a bit in its mouth and that God holds it in and nothing can hurt them—nothing can happen to them but what God permits. On the dry land, too, the same blessed text has often comforted the Lord’s people. Some are particularly timid in times of storm when the thunder comes, peal after peal and the lightning flashes follow each other—when it seems as if the very earth did tremble and the skies fled away from the glance of an angry God.

Oh, how it calms the anxious heart, stills the foreboding fears, and makes the heart tranquil to feel that He covers us with His feathers and that under His wings we may trust! I always feel ashamed to stay indoors when peals of thunder shake the solid earth and lightning flashes like arrows from the sky. Then God is abroad and I love to walk out in the open space and to look up and mark the opening gates of Heaven as the lightning reveals far beyond and enables you to look into the unseen. I like to hear my heavenly Father’s voice, but I do not think we could ever come to a state of peace in such times as those if we did not feel that He was near—that He was our Friend—that He would not hurt the children of His own love. It would be contrary to His own Nature and altogether apart from the kindness of His Character, as well as the constancy of His Covenant engagements, that He should suffer anything to touch His people that could do them real ill.

Nor is it only from violent commotions in the physical world that you are liable to suffer shocks. Many of you have known times of disruption in the mercantile world which have been the occasion of frightful horror. The wheels of trade have run off the tramline through some violent collision of opposing interests. Or on a larger scale the whole system of commerce may appear to have collapsed as with an earthquake. Great houses, whose very names were the bulwarks of credit, have suddenly tottered and fell. While curious eves have looked on with marvel, many have been the humble people struggling hard for a bare livelihood who were involved in loss and disaster which paralyzed all their efforts. Though panic has prevailed on every side, has it not been sweet, passing sweet, to find succor under the wings of the Almighty and hear His voice saying to you, “Trust in the Lord and do good, so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed”?

I know that such calamities are heavy and hard to bear. Were it not so we should never have been furnished with such strong consolation. When the foundations of enterprise are slackened and gigantic schemes burst like a bubble. When the mill is at rest and looks like the hulk of a disabled vessel. When the workshops are closed and the artisans, skilled to labor, seek a pauper’s pittance at the gates of the union—or when the affliction falls upon the fields and the folds, a blight destroying the crops and disease cutting down the oxen—these are the sorrows of the world, and chosen men of old have trusted in God nor found Him to fail in straits like these. So said one, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

Yet more, Brothers and Sisters—who among you need be reminded of the fears that seize the breast when pestilence is spreading through the land and rumors that it has approached your own doors have reached your ears? Neighbors or kinsfolk are struck down without warning. With anxious looks and eager enquiries you listen for tidings that are well near death to hear. Have you ever counted the watches of the night, dreading every sound and pondering every sensation as if it were an ominous omen? What about when the cholera has been raging, or the fever has been making havoc—when science has been baffled to find out the cause or cure of some insidious disease that walks in darkness and wastes at noonday? And when those who were prone to jeer at religion and laugh at prayer have uttered pious ejaculations and said, “This is no doubt a visitation of God”—do I need to remind you?

Well, at such times has it not been good for you to seek the cover of His wings and rely on the gracious promise, “Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation, there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling”? In all times of public calamity, in any season of domestic grief and on every occasion of personal danger, I beseech you, do not cast away your confidence which has great recompense and reward—for if your faith will not bear up under such trials as these, what is it good for? What anchorage is there for your soul? If you cannot bear these little alarms, how will you do in the swellings of Jordan, when grim Death appears in view? And amidst the terrors of the world to come, when the very pillars of the universe shall reel and all things shall pass away—how will you be able to stand calmly and serenely if these things move you?

No, Beloved, let the weakest of you play the man and as you have believed in your God, be ashamed of cowardly fear! Be as Ezra was when having once made a resolve, he resolved to abide by it at all hazard. “The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him.” Pluck up courage and say within yourselves, “Now will I prove that promise true, ‘He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.’ But texts of Scripture like this are not made to be hung up on a nail and only taken down now and then in stress of weather! Blessed be God, the promise before us is available for sunny days, too—yes, for every hour of this mortal life. When you leave your house tomorrow morning, you will little know what peril may befall you during the day. “At least,” said an old Divine, who was accustomed to spend the most part of his time in his study—“at least the studious man is safe from the accidents which shorten the lives of others.”

So he vainly thought. The very day after he had used the expression, a chimney stack fell through his study and had he happened to have been sitting where he customarily did, he must have been crushed to pieces! There are dangers everywhere and the guardian care of God can never be safely dispensed with. If we walk aright, we shall never venture upon a single day without first seeking Divine protection. How many who have escaped out of terrible storms have, nevertheless, died in a calm? Where some have passed through battles without a scar, they have afterwards been killed by an accident so slight that they would utterly have despised a precaution to avoid it. You always need Divine protection and, Believer in Christ, you shall always have it, for, “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.” This is for you tonight when you strip off your garments and lay your weary frame upon your bed. Then you may say, “Now, Lord, cover me with Your feathers.” And it is for you tomorrow, when you are going out to your daily labor, not knowing what may befall you, you can use the same petition, “This day, O God, grant that under Your wings I may trust.”

When—shall I ask again—may this promise be relied upon? Well, Beloved, it may be particularly relied upon in times of temptation. Earnest Christian men are not so much afraid of trials as of temptations. If you could extract the tempting element from our afflictions you would have rendered the gall devoid of at least half its bitterness. To suffer is little, but to be provoked to sin—this is the great cause of fear. “Give me neither poverty nor riches,” said the wise man. But why? It was not because poverty would be inconvenient, but lest he should sin through poverty. “Give me not riches,” he said—not because riches might not be desirable, but lest he should sin through the deceitfulness of wealth. The great horror of a Christian is sin. Find him a place on earth where he could live without sin and there he would fix his residence, not asking you whether it were a dungeon or a palace!

If there were a place where my temper could never be ruffled. A place where I could never be agitated into pride or be silenced into cowardice. If I could find a spot where sloth would never molest me, or where earthly passions would never rise up for my casting down, thrice happy would I be to borrow the wings of a dove and fly there at once! As your temptations are just the things which you dread, it behooves you to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” but remember, if the Providence of God should at any other time constrain you to go where you are tempted and must be tempted, you may then fall back upon this gracious Word of God—“He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.”

I have noticed that young people who are often exposed to severe temptations are very generally preserved from falling into sin. But I have noticed that others, both old and young, whose temptations were not remarkably severe, have been generally those who have been the first to fall. In fact, it is a lamentable thing to have to say, but lamentably true it is, that at the period of life when you would reckon, from the failure of the passions, the temptation would be less vigorous, that very period is marked more than any other by the most solemn transgressions among God’s people. I think I have heard that many horses fall at the bottom of a hill because the driver thinks the danger past, and the need to hold the reins with a firm grip less pressing as they are just about to renew their progress and begin to ascend again.

So it is often with us—when we are not tempted through imminent danger we are the more tempted through slothful ease. I think it was Ralph Erskine who said, “There is no devil so bad as no devil.” The worst temptation that ever overtakes us, is, in some respects, preferable to our being left alone altogether without any sense of caution or stimulus to watch and pray. Be always on your watchtower and you shall always be secure.

In anticipating the temptations of next week—you working men who labor side-by-side with skeptics. You young women living in graceless families. You merchants who have to go among others whose mode of conducting trade is not clean. (You each and all know the temptations common to your own lot in the busy commonwealth). Resolve in the strength of God that you will walk uprightly and that as Christians you will not soil your garments. And then you may come to your heavenly Father for His protection and say to Him, “My God, I am more afraid of sin than I am of lightning, or of fire, or of the murderer’s dagger. Keep me day by day from sin. Defend me from evil. ‘Cover me with Your feathers, for under Your wings will I trust.’”

So, again, this text may be very blessedly applied to our souls and I hope it will be, in times of expected trials. I do not know that it is right for us to anticipate trials at all. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” We ought never to sit down and begin fretting ourselves about what may happen, because the ill we dread may never come to pass. Many a true servant of God has said to himself—“What shall I do when I get old? I am just able, now, to pick up a living, but what shall I do when these withered limbs can no longer earn my daily bread?” Do? Why, you will have the same Father, then, as you have now to succor you and you will have the same Providence then as now to supply your needs! You thank God for your daily bread, now, and you shall have your daily bread then, for He will cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust!

Some of God’s servants who have been thus afraid have had no cause of complaint, for their latter days have been blessed. They have been placed in comfortable circumstances and they have had to wonder at the liberal hand which furnished their table and to chide the unbelief of their own fretful spirits. Others of them have been taken away from the ills they forecast and conveyed to Heaven long before they had reached anything like the period of bodily infirmity or mental imbecility they dreaded. So with you, dear Friends. God will take care of you. Only rest on Him.

It is bad to make troubles. I always say of home-made troubles, that they are very like home-made clothes—they never fit well and they are generally a long while before they are worn out. You had better take the troubles God sends you—they are more suitable for you! You will be able to carry them, and you will be able to get over them by His Grace. Do not begin to think of what you will do in the year, 1899. Why, Jesus Christ may come before then, or you may be absent from the body and present with Him before then! But, if you are of such a nervous temper that you cannot help sometimes anticipating, or if you are so speculatively disposed that you will carry your almanacs with you and chronicle black days in the coming years, then just make a note of this in the margin— “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust.”

Let the unknown tomorrow bring with it what it may, it cannot bring us anything but what God shall bear us through. So let it come and let it go. The Lord’s name be praised! We shall bless His name in it and after it and why not before it? There is another hour in which this text will be particularly consoling to us, and that is the hour of death. Ah, we may sing what we will and say what we will, but dying is no child’s play. Thank God it is going Home! We know that it is not death in some respects. It is but a change in our mode of life. Absent from the body we are present with the Lord! But still, we cannot think of that death dew which will lie cold on our brow, the failing voice and the glazing eye, without some natural shrugs. When we would gladly go forth to meet it, we shrink back again to life—“Fond of our prison and our clay.” But what shall we do when we come to die, when the physician can no longer help us and the beating of the pulse waxes faint and few? Why, then, “He shall cover us with His feathers and under His wings shall we trust.”

Oh, it will be so blessed to go cowering down right under the shadow of the Almighty, hiding ourselves as the little chickens do in the hen’s feathers—losing our own individuality in the realization of our union to Christ—finding that it is not death to die, but coming nearer to God in very deed, in blissful experience, nearer than ever we were before! Looking forward into that unknown future, across the shoreless sea and listening to the billows as we hear them sounding in the dark, we thank God that they are not billows of fire to us—that they are not waves of everlasting wrath, but that they are waves of eternal bliss!

But, be they what they may, whatever there may be in the future, whatever may be meant by the millennium and the burning of the earth, and the wreck of nature—whatever may be meant by vials and trumpets and by all besides in the arena of prophecy, “He shall cover us with His feathers and under His wings shall we trust.” And amidst the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, safe, safe, safe and near our God and blessed eternally shall we be! Beloved, in such an hour may such an oracle as this come rolling sweetly into your souls to cheer and comfort you!

II. Having thus answered a first question and told you when this promise may be relied upon, let us proceed to answer another question—HOW MAY WE EXPECT THE TEXT TO BE FULFILLED? It may possibly be verified to us by our being preserved altogether from the danger which we dread. God has often, as predicted in the present Psalm, in times of pestilence and famine and war, preserved His people by remarkable Providences. Especially has this been the case in the experience of those of His people who have been lively in their faith and careful to follow His instructions. Now, if there is one instruction that Jesus Christ has plainly given to a Christian, it is this—“I say unto you, resist not evil.”

Our Brethren of the Society of Friends have been admirably firm and consistent in their declaration that they have no right to bear arms. In the times of the massacre in Ireland, when Protestants took a town, they generally cut the throats of the Catholics. And when Roman Catholics took a town, they always returned the compliment by killing the Protestants, but the cry always was—“Spare the Quakers! Spare the Quakers!” They had hurt no one—they had taken up no arms. Strange to tell, through that long and bitter warfare only three Quakers died and those three had fled from their homes to find a refuge in a neighboring castle with the troops. Of course they rested on an arm of flesh and it failed them.

When the British bolts were flying through Copenhagen, fast and furious, and the Danish town seemed given over to destruction by Nelson’s terrific bombardment, there was one house upon which not a shot or shell ever fell. Nelson and the British knew nothing of that house, of course, but there it stood, as safely as old Rahab’s house when the walls of Jericho fell down. It was the house of a Quaker, who, when an order was given for all to defend their houses in a particular way, said he had nothing to do with fighting. The man rested in God and God’s protection was wonderfully spread over him. In the literature of the Society of Friends, there is a large number of anecdotes showing how God has especially marked out times of peril for preserving those men who scrupulously refused to defend themselves and rested on the promise of their faithful God.

We all know how singularly the Lord has shielded those who trusted in Him in the times of pestilence. That old house, still standing in the High Street at Chester, is a lasting proof of the power of faith, with its old letters cut in the black wood, “God’s Providence is my inheritance.” When everybody else was flying out of Chester into the country, the man who lived in that house just wrote that inscription up over the door and stayed in the town, depending on God that he should be preserved. And none in his house fell a victim to that black death which was slaying its thousands on all sides. Strong faith has always a particular immunity in times of trouble. When a man has really, under a sense of duty—under a conscientious conviction—rested alone in God, he has been enabled to walk where the thickest dangers were flying, all unharmed. He has put his foot upon the adder and the young lion and the dragon has he trampled under his feet. Having confidence in God, God has verified and vindicated His promise and the child of God that could so trust has never been put to confusion.

There are some dangers from which the Providence of God does not preserve the Lord’s people, but still He covers them with His feathers in another sense, by giving them Divine Grace to bear up under their trouble. It little matters, you know, whether a man has no burden and no strength, or a heavy burden and great strength. Probably of the two, if it were put to the most of us, we should prefer to have the burden and the strength. I know I should. Now there is generally this for you—that if you have little trouble, you will have little faith—but if you have great faith, you must expect to have great trouble. A manly spirit would choose to take the trouble and take the faith, too. Well, then, God will give you this cover with His feathers—though you have to carry the load you shall have strength enough to carry it. You shall find, as a dear saint once said, the sweetest thing next to Christ in all the world was Christ’s Cross. And that to carry Christ’s Cross was the next best thing to beholding His Glory. You shall find your afflictions become your mercies and your trials become your comforts. You shall glory in tribulation and find light in the midst of gloom and have joy unspeakable in the season of your sorrow. Thus God covers us as with His feathers.

In yet another way does God set seal to this record when by His Grace, having sustained His servants in their trouble He brings them out of it greatly enriched. Oh, it is a great blessing to be put through the fire if you come out purified! It is a sweet mercy to have to go through the floods if some filthiness may be removed! The children of Israel went down to Egypt to sojourn there, but after hard servitude and cruel oppression they came up out of it with silver and gold, much enriched by their bondage. Did you ever notice that memorable passage in which the Lord has borne witness to His gracious heed for them before He brought about their deliverance? “God heard their groaning and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel and God had respect unto them.”

Comment is needless. In the season of their direst grief God was All in All to them. And you, child of God, shall lose nothing by your losses—you shall be a gainer by them, a greater gainer than others by their gains—for all your losses and troubles shall not touch your immortal part! As bars of iron make not a prison or a cage to a free soul, so afflictions that are merely temporal and bodily shall not hamper or lessen the joy of an immortal spirit. No, we shall mount above the billows of our griefs and sing as we lift our heads above the spray! We shall rise above the clouds of our present afflictions and look down upon them as they float beneath our feet, rejoicing that the Lord has borne us, as upon wings, above them all, to bring us to Himself!

So you see, either by keeping us out of trouble, by helping us to bear it, or by bringing us through it with great gain to ourselves, “He shall cover us with His feathers and under His wings shall we trust.”

III. A third enquiry suggests itself to me, in responding to which I shall be very brief—WHY MAY WE BE QUITE SURE THAT IT SHALL BE SO? You may find a strong ground of personal assurance in the fact that faith enlists the sympathy of God. Faith seems to me to enlist everybody’s sympathy. There is a blind man going along and he wants to get across the street. He puts perfect confidence in you, though he cannot see you and does not know you. He feels sure that you will lead him across. Now, I know you will.

If there were a little child that had lost its way and it came running up to you, a big, tall man, and said, “O, Sir, I do not know my way home, nor where I came from, but I feel quite sure you will take care of me till I have found my mother.” Well, you would not, any one of you, turn round and spurn him away—you would feel as if you were firmly held with chains around you. Now, it is a point with God that He always will be as good as you think Him to be, yes, and a great deal better! And if you but think that He will be a gracious and merciful God to you and so rely on Him as His child, it is not in the heart of God to turn away from a humble faith that dares to lay hold upon Him. Try it, dear Friends, and you will prove it true.

And you may be quite sure that He will cover you with His feathers, because we have hundreds of promises to that effect. There is not time to quote them all, but there is one like this, “He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” And here is another, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” And then there is this, “Fear you not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God! I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.” “Fear not; for you shall not be ashamed: neither be you confounded.” There are hundreds of promises like these, and will He break them? You keep your promise to your child and will not God keep His promise to you? O rest in Him, then! He shall cover us with His feathers, for His own Word declares it!

Moreover, you are His child and what will not a father do for His own dear child? Were one a stranger you might take little heed though he were in trouble, in danger, or in deep distress—but your child, your own child—oh, you cannot rest while he suffers! How agitated we are when our little ones are sick. How we get the best advice for them. When they are in pain how willingly would we take their pain if we could relieve them and spare those cries that seem to pierce our heart as well as our ears! If anybody hurts them, why the most placid of us find our temper soon roused. “And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

Though He bears long with their adversaries, yet will He come to the help of His own beloved ones, for He is fatherly in all the sensitiveness of His heart, as well as in all the judiciousness of His chastisements. He will protect His own. Remember there is one point of which God is always jealous, that is His own honor. There is no verse of any hymn we ever sing more Scriptural than that one we were singing just now—

“His honor **is engaged to save  
The meanest of His sheep.  
All that His heavenly Father gave  
His hands securely keep.”**

Christ must convey even the smallest boat safe into the port of Paradise. He must not suffer one of these little ones to perish, for such is not the will of our Father who is in Heaven. Come then, you tremblers, you doubters, you little ones, you that think you cannot have a part in the promise! Come now, come nestle down under those great wings which seem so close to you! The wings that are lined with the feathers of the Eternal will be strong wings, as though they were bars of iron through which no storms of trouble can ever beat—through which the enemy, though he comes from Hell itself—shall not be able to drive his darts. Come to the strong wings yet so softly feathered, so tenderly lined with loving kindness and affection that the weakest and most trembling may find comfort there!

And now, dear Friends, although I have not said anything new, yet I know that this is full of comfort to God’s people. It must be so! At least, if I am one of them, I know it is, for it has often greatly cheered and gladdened me in the times of darkness and despondency, (and I have plenty of such times), to feel that I could abide under the wings of my God and all was well and all was safe. But what must it be to be without God? Blessed be His name, we do not mean to try it, but what must it be? “Sam,” said a man once to his Negro, “would you give up your religion and be made a king, or would you keep your Jesus Christ and be flogged to death?” “Oh, Massa,” said he, “give me Jesus Christ and flog me to death 20 times if you will! I could never give Him up! He is my joy and my comfort.”

And truly we can say that! Give us but a sense of Divine love and we will not strike about our condition. Only to know that God is our Friend we will not ask who else is on our side, for having God we have all! Let who will be our enemies—all must be well when God befriends us! What must you be without God, some of you? You may be trying to satisfy your soul with the love of kindred—your wife and children are your only inheritance under the sun. That is better than some men strive after. But they are dying comforts—there is a thorn in all these roses, sweet roses as they are. I do not think the dearest wife and the most beloved children can really fully fill the heart. I know you need something more sometimes. I know you do!

Others of you have been trying to fill your hearts full with those idle associates of yours, those jolly companions, those jolly fellows, just the sort you delight to spend an evening with. They are poor comforts when you are sick and they will be poorer comforts, still, when you come to die. You must not suppose that if you loved Jesus Christ and put your trust in Him, you would give up the joy of life. You would just have found it! You would, then, begin to be happy because you would have found what your soul needs to fill it. As quaint old Quarles says—“The heart is a triangle and all the world is a globe and you cannot fill a triangle with a globe. It is nothing but the Trinity that can fill the heart.” Let Father, Son and Spirit get into the heart by a living faith and the heart is right full to the brim and the man is content in all his trials!

I would you had Christ to be yours! He is to be had, my Friend. Whoever trusts in Him is saved. He is God—worthy to be trusted! Moreover He died, the Just for the unjust, bearing our sins. Depend upon the merit of that death of His and you shall be saved! God bring you into a state of faith and bless you now for Christ’s sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 91.* Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #124 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER  
NO. 124

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 29, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.” Psalm 91:5.**

IF Moses wrote this Psalm, he might represent the fowler as being, in this case, the king of Egypt who sought to slay him, or the Amalekites, who pounced upon Israel in the plain when they little expected it. If David penned it, he might have compared Saul to the fowler, for he says he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. But we believe if the verse is applicable to either of those cases, it was intended by the Psalmist not to have a private interpretation but to be applicable to all time! And we believe it is spoken concerning that archenemy of souls, the great deceiver, Satan, of whom we just now sang—

*“Satan, the fowler, who betrays*

*Unguarded souls a thousand ways”*  
“The prince of the power of this world, the spirit which still works in the children of disobedience,” is like a fowler, always attempting to destroy us. It was once said by a talented writer that the old devil was dead and that there was a new devil, now—by which he meant to say that the devil of old times was a rather different devil from the deceiver of these times. We believe that it is the same evil spirit, but there is a difference in his mode of attack. The devil of 500 years ago was a black and grimy thing, well portrayed in our old pictures of that evil spirit. He was a persecutor who cast men into the furnace and put them to death for serving Christ. The devil of this day is a well-spoken gentleman—he does not persecute—he rather attempts to persuade and to beguile. He is not now the furious Romanist so much as the insinuating unbeliever, attempting to overturn our religion while at the same time he pretends he would make it more rational and more triumphant. He, only, would link worldliness with religion, and so he would really make religion void, under the cover of developing the great power of the Gospel and bringing out secrets which our forefathers had never discovered! Satan is always a fowler. Whatever his tactics may be, his objective is still the same—to catch men in his net. Men are here compared to silly, weak birds that have not skill enough to avoid the snare and have not strength enough to escape from it. Satan is the fowler. He has been so and still is so—and if he does not now attack us as the roaring lion, roaring against us in persecution, he attacks us as the adder, creeping silently along the path, endeavoring to bite our heel with his poisoned fangs and weaken the power of Divine Grace and ruin the life of godliness within us! Our text is a very comforting one to all Believers when they are beset by temptation. “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

First, a few words concerning the snare of the fowler. Secondly, the deliverance. And thirdly, the certainty of it, dwelling upon that word, “surely,” for it seems to be the diamond wherewith this precious golden Promise is embellished! “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

I. First, then, THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER. It is an illustration too suggestive for me to thoroughly unravel. I must leave it for your meditations at home to enumerate the different ways in which a fowler attempts to take his birds. Then you will have suggested to you the different means which the evil spirit employs for the destruction of souls. Allow me, however, just to begin and pass over two or three points connected with the fowler and with the Evil One.

1. First, the fowler’s snare is intimately connected with secrecy. “Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.” Therefore the fowler carefully covers up his trap or if the trap, itself, is uncovered, he does well beguile the bird so that it is utterly ignorant of his intention to take it in the trap—little thinking that the food laid there for its banqueting is really placed there for its enticement and destruction! The fowler, when he goes after his birds, is very careful lest they should discover him. We hear, for instance, that in the taking of wild ducks in Lincolnshire, a man will hold before his mouth a piece of turf, in order that the smell of his breath may not be perceived by the birds who are exceedingly wary. The temptations of the world are of this secret sort to a Christian, though not to the wicked man, for the wicked man sins with his eyes wide open— dashing into the net knowing it is a net laying hold of iniquity with both its hands, even when destruction stares him in the face! He will commit a sin that he knows is condemned even by the law of the land—he will rush into a crime, concerning the guilt of which no doubt can be entertained. Not so the Christian—he is taken by secrecy! “Ah,” says one, “if I thought such-and-such a thing were really wrong. If I were perfectly convicted of its wrongfulness, I would give it up.” It is just there the difficulty lies! So would the bird say—“If I thought that really were a trap, I would not enter it. If I were perfectly persuaded that net would entangle me, I would not fly to such-and-such a spot. I would not approach there at all if I were sure it would be to my destruction.” How many a professor there is who asks the question, “May I go to this place? May I go to that place?” Some of us answer, “No,” and we are called Puritans for it! But let those who have attempted to keep their godliness intact, while they pursue the pleasures of this world, stand up and make the mournful confession that the healthiness of the two things can never exist together!

We must either serve God wholly, or serve the Evil One wholly. “If God is God, serve Him. If Baal is God, serve him.” One, or else the other! Many a man has been entrapped into sin by Satan not knowing that it was evil! Someone has hinted to him in business, for instance—“You may very safely do such-and-such a thing—all the shopkeepers in the street have done it. It is not actually dishonest—it improves the article—it really does! And although you can thus sell the article at a higher rate than you ought to sell it, you need not tell the public! And if the article is all the better for it, it is quite fair and safe that you should adulterate it.” And so the good easy man, not opening both his eyes, I think, but shutting one of them a little, lest he should see too well to be able to fill his pockets in the dark, is a little taken aside, but, by-and-by, he is led to discover that the act which he has done is the taking of him in the snare of the fowler—for he has been sinning against his God and his God, therefore, punishes him for it with many stripes and lays His rod upon him! I do not think that a Christian is so often betrayed into a sin that is palpable and known as he is into a sin that is secret. If the devil comes to my door with his horns visible, I will never let him in! But if he comes with his hat on as a respectable gentlemen, he is at once admitted. The metaphor may be very quaint, but it is quite true. Many a man has taken in an evil thing because it has been varnished and glossed over and not apparently an evil—and he has thought in his heart there is not much harm in it. So he has let in the little thing and it has been like the breaking forth of water—the first drop has brought after it a torrent! The beginning has been but the beginning of a fearful end!

Take care, Christian, of things that are secret! Take care of the common doings of the world which are well enough for the world, perhaps. We would not deny them their pleasures, for they have no others, but they are not good for you, for you have a finer life—a life of a finer texture and order than can exist in the haunts of ungodly persons! Remember, you are not to be a judge for others. Some men, especially those who are unconverted, can, without being led into sin, indulge in many gaieties and merriments. But the Christian is like the Englishman who cannot hope to survive long where the jungle fever reigns. The native can live there but he cannot. And so you who are twice-born will find your piety ruined by that which to a worldly man, does not lead him into greater evil than that which he would naturally commit. You are to have a stricter rule on yourselves than others and are to be more stern in your piety than the world would have you be, for sin is usually hidden and the snare is not often made apparent. “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

2. In the second place, the snare of the fowler is generally noted for its adaptation. You do not find a fowler setting the same snare for one bird as for another. He knows his bird and he adapts his bait to it. He would be an unwise fowler who should go to work with the same machinery to catch the lark that flies on high as the duck that swims along the stream. The fowler is wiser than that—he adapts his snare to the condition of the bird which he desires to take! Satan, the fowler, does just the same. There is one man here. He tempts him to drunkenness. Perhaps that would naturally be his sin if left without Grace in his heart. And Satan knowing it to be his weak point, attempts to overcome him by surfeiting gluttony and drunkenness. Another man is utterly impervious to any temptation to that bestial habit but, it may be, he is easily taken in another snare—the snare of lust. Therefore Satan adapts his temptation to the hot blood of the man who naturally would be inclined to live a life of sin. Another one, perhaps, eschews every lascivious and sensual habit—then Satan comes to him and adapts his temptation to the shape of pride! The man is naturally a melancholy man, fond of solitude—Satan gets him, if he can, to wrap himself up in a solitary dignity, to say, “I am holy.” “Lord, I thank you, I am not as other men are.” Or if a man is not naturally inclined to a very high degree of pride, Satan takes him with sloth. The man likes an easy life—Satan therefore adapts his bait to him by letting him sit still, fold his arms—and so perish by slothfulness. And mark this—he who sits still in the frost when the snow is on the ground, in the depths of the wild regions of the frozen zone, must as surely perish by his idleness, as if he drove a dagger to his heart! Satan knows that and so adapts his bait accordingly. Oh, how often it happens, Beloved, that you and I condemn a thing in another person which we allow in ourselves, perhaps without knowing it! We say of such an one, “How proud he is!” Well, our pride is not exactly of that shape. We have got another shaped pride but the same article, labeled differently but the same thing!

Satan adapts the pride to each particular case. We are rich—he does not, perhaps, tempt us to the pride of riches but he tempts us to the pride of mastership and makes us harsh masters to our servants. Or if he does not tempt us to that pride, he perhaps enchants us with the pride of generosity and we are apt to boast of our kindness and of what we have given away. He will always adapt his trap to his man and his bait to his bird. He will not tempt you all with the same temptations he would tempt me with. Nor me with the temptations with which he would naturally assail another. “The snare of the fowler.” A common enemy we have to deal with. He knows our weak points, he has been dealing with men for these last 6,000 years. He knows all about them! He is possessed of a gigantic intellect. Though he is a fallen spirit, he is easily able to discover where our sore places are and there it is he immediately attacks us! If we are like Achilles and cannot be wounded anywhere but in our heel, then at the heel he will send his dart and nowhere else! He will find out our easily besetting sin and there, if he can, he will attempt to work our ruin and our destruction. Let us bless God that it is written, “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

3. In the next place, the fowler’s snare is frequently connected with pleasure, profit and advantage. In the bird’s case, it is for the seed scattered on the ground that he flies to the snare. It is some tempting bait which allures him to his death. And usually Satan, the fowler, uses a temptation wherewith to beguile us. “Oh!” says one, “I cannot give up such-and-such a thing, it is so pleasant. Sir, you never knew the charms of such-and-such a pursuit, otherwise you could never advise me to relinquish it.” Yes, my Friend, but it is just the sweetness of it to you that makes it the more dangerous! Satan never sells his poisons naked, he always gilds them before he vends them. He knows very well that men will buy them and swallow them if he does but gild them beforehand. Take care of pleasures—mind what you are doing when you are doing them—many of them are innocent and healthful—but many of them are destructive! It is said that where the most beautiful cacti grow, there the most venomous serpents are to be found at the root of every plant. And it is so with sin. Your fairest pleasures will harbor your grossest sins. Take care! Take care of your pleasures. Cleopatra’s asp was introduced in a basket of flowers—so are sins often brought to us in the flowers of our pleasures. Satan offers to the drunk the sweetness of the intoxicating cup which rejoices him when his brain is rioting in frolic and when his soul is lifted up within him. He offers to the lustful man, the scenes and pleasures of carnal mirth and merriment and delight and so he leads him astray with the bait, concealing the hook which afterwards shall pain him. He gives to you and to me, each of us, the offer of our peculiar joy. He tickles us with pleasures, that he may lay hold upon us and so have us in his power! I would have every Christian be especially on his guard against the very thing that is most pleasing to his human nature. I would not have him avoid everything that pleases him, but I would have him be on his guard against it. Just like Job, when his sons had been feasting in their houses—he did not forbid them doing it—but he said, “I will offer a sacrifice, lest my sons should have sinned in their hearts and should have cursed God foolishly.” He was more careful over them at the time of their feasting than at any other season! Let us do the same. Let us remember that the snare of the fowler is generally connected with some pretended pleasure or profit, but that Satan’s end is not our pleasing but our destruction!

4. In the next place, sometimes the fowler very wisely employs the force of example. We all know the influence of the duck decoy in endeavoring to bring others into the snare. How very often Satan, the fowler, employs a decoy to lead God’s people into sin! You get with a man—you think him to be a true Christian. You have some respect for his character, he is a high professor—can talk religion by the yard and can give you any quantity of theology you like to ask for! You watch him commit a sin—ten to one you will do the same, if you have much respect for him— and so he will lead you on. And mark—Satan is very careful in the men whom he chooses to be decoys. He never employs a wicked man to be a decoy for a good man. It is very seldom, when Satan would decoy a Christian into a snare, that he makes use of an open reprobate. No, he makes use of the man who is supposedly religious and who looks to be of the same quality as yourself! And therefore Satan entices you astray. Let a bad man meet me in the street and ask me to commit sin? The devil knows better than to set him at any such work as that, because he knows I would pass by immediately! If he wants his errand well done, he sends one to me whom I call, Brother, and so through the brotherhood of profession I am apt to give him credence and pay him respect. And then if he goes astray, the force of example is very powerful and so I may easily be led into the net, too. Take care of your best friends! Be careful of your companions. Choose the best you can, then follow them no farther than they follow Christ. Let your course be entirely independent of everyone else. Say with Joshua, let others do what they will, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

5. Note, once more, that sometimes the fowler, when he fails to take his bird by deceit and craft, will go a-hawking after it—will send his hawk into the air to bring down his prey! It often happens, when the devil cannot ruin a man by getting him to commit a sin, he attempts to slander him. He sends a hawk after him and tries to bring him down by slandering his good name! I will give you a piece of advice. I know a good minister, now in venerable old age, who was once most villainously lied against and slandered by a man who hated him only for the Truth’s sake. The good man was grieved—he threatened the slanderer with a lawsuit, unless he apologized. He did apologize. The slander was printed in the papers in a public apology and you know what was the consequence? The slander was more believed than if he had said nothing about it! And I have learned this lesson—to do with the slanderous hawk what the little birds do—just fly up! The hawk cannot do them any hurt while they keep above him—it is only when they come down that he can injure them. It is only when by mounting above the birds that the hawk comes sweeping down upon them and destroys them! If any slander you, do not go down to them. Let them slander on. Say, as David said concerning Shimei, “If the Lord has given him commandment to curse, let him curse,” and if the sons of Zeruiah say, “Let us go and take this dead dog’s head,” you say, “No, let him curse!” And in that way you will live down slander. If some of us turned aside to notice every bit of a sparrow that began chirping at us, we would have nothing to do but to answer them. If I were to fight people on every Doctrine I preach, I should do nothing else but just amuse the devil and indulge the combative principles of certain religionists who like nothing better than quarrelling!

By the Grace of God, say what you please against me—I will never answer you but go straight on. All shall end well, if the character is but kept clean. The more dirt that is thrown on it by slander, the more it shall glisten and the more brightly it shall shine. Have you ever felt your fingers itch, sometimes, to be at a man who slanders you? I have. I have sometimes thought, “I cannot hold my tongue any longer, I must answer that fellow.” But I have asked of God for Grace to imitate Jesus, who, “when He was reviled, reviled not again.” And by His strength let them go straight on! The surest way in the world to get rid of a slander is just to let it alone and say nothing about it, for if you prosecute the rascal who utters it, or if you threaten him with an action and he has to apologize, you will be no better off—some fools will still believe it! Let it alone—let it keep as it is. And so God will help you to fulfill, by your wisdom, His own Promise, “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

And now, before I close this point, let me observe once more—the fowler, when he is determined to take his birds, uses all these arts at once, perhaps, and besets the bird on every side. So you will remember, Beloved, it is with you. Satan will not leave a stone unturned to ruin your soul forever—

*“Amidst a thousand snares I stand  
Upheld and guarded by Your hand.”*

Old Master Quarles says—  
*“The close pursuer’s busy hands do plant  
Snares in your substance, snares attend your needs, Snares in your credit; snares in your disgrace; Snares in your high estate; snares in your base; Snares tuck your bed and snares surround your board; Snares watch your thoughts and snares attach your word; Snares in your quiet, snares in your commotion; Snares in your diet; snares in your devotion!  
Snares lurk in your resolves, snares in your doubt; Snares lie within your heart and snares without; Snares are above your head and snares beneath; Snares in your sickness, snares are in your death.”*

There is not a place beneath which a Believer walks that is free from snares! Behind every tree there is the archer with his barbed arrow. Behind every bush there is the lion seeking to devour. Under every piece of grass there lies the adder. They are everywhere! Let us be careful. Let us gird ourselves with the might of God’s Omnipotence and then shall His Holy Spirit keep us so that we shall tread on the lion and adder—the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet and we shall be “delivered from the snare of the fowler.”

II. Now we pass on to the second point—THE DELIVERANCE. God delivers His people from the snare of the fowler. Two thoughts here—

from— out of. First, he delivers them from the snare—does not let them get in it. Secondly, when they do get in it, He delivers them out of it. The first Promise is the most precious to some of us, the second is the best to others.

He shall deliver you from the snare. How does He do that? Very often by trouble. Trouble is often the means whereby God delivers us from snares. You have all heard of the old story of the celebrated painter who was painting in St. Paul’s. Looking at his work, one day, he went gradually back, inch by inch, to get a view of it so that he might see the excellence of its proportions—until his feet were just on the edge of the platform upon which he stood. He would have fallen down and been dashed in pieces upon the pavement beneath but just at that moment a workman who stood there, desirous to save his life and not knowing how to do it, hit upon an expedient, which proved to be a very wise one. Instead of shouting out to his master, “Sir, you are in danger,” which would most certainly have sent him backward, he took up a brush and dipping it in a pot of paint, dashed it at the picture. The good man rushed forward in anger to chastise him—but when it was explained, he clearly saw that his servant had acted wisely. Just so with God. You and I have often painted a fine picture and we have been walking backwards admiring it. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction. And He, by a sad Providence, blasts our prospect, takes away our child from us, buries our wife, removes some darling object of our pleasures and we rush forward and say, “Lord, why this?”—utterly unconscious that if it had not been for trouble, we might have been dashed in pieces and our lives would have been ended in destruction! I doubt not that many of you have been saved from ruin by your sorrows, your griefs, your troubles, your woes, your losses and your crosses. All these have been the breaking of the net that set you free from the snare of the fowler!  
At other times God keeps His people from the sin of the fowler by giving them great spiritual strength, a spirit of great courage—so that when they are tempted to do evil, they say, with decision, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Oh, that was a noble escape of Joseph when his mistress laid hold of his garment! That was a noble escape of his when his soul escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler. And I doubt not there are many here who have done deeds almost as noble as that of Joseph! They have had Divine Grace within their hearts so that they have turned away their eyes from beholding folly—and when they have been tempted to evil, they have put their foot upon it and said—“I cannot, I cannot, I am a child of God. I cannot and I must not.” And though the thing was pleasing to themselves, yet have they rejected it. You remember the case of Mr. Stand-Fast in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress? Madame Bubble had greatly enticed poor Mr. Stand-Fast with her offers. He says, “There was one in very pleasant attire, but old, who presented herself to me and offered me three things, to wit, her body, her purse and her bed. Now the truth is, I was both weary and sleepy—I am also as poor as an owlet and that, perhaps, the witch knew. Well, I repulsed her once and again but she ignored my repulses and smiled. Then I began to be angry, but she mattered that nothing at all. Then she made offers again and said if I would be ruled by her, she would make me great and happy. For, she said, I am the mistress of the world and men are made happy by me. Then I asked her name and she told me it was Madame Bubble. This set me further from her, but she still followed me with enticements. Then I betook me, as you saw, to my knees, and with hands lifted up and cries, I prayed to Him that had said He would help. So just as you came up the gentlewoman went her way. Then I continued to give thanks for this, my great deliverance, for I verily believe she intended no good but rather sought to make an end of me in my journey.” That is how God delivers His people from the snare of the fowler—by giving them the spirit of prayer as well as the spirit of courage—so that they call upon God in the day of trouble and He delivers them!  
And I have noticed one more very singular thing. Sometimes I, myself, have been saved from the snare of the fowler (I cannot tell how, exactly), in this way. I have felt that if the temptation had come a week before, my mind was in that peculiar condition that I would have almost inevitably been led away by it! But when it came, my mind, by passing through some process, had become in such a condition that the temptation was no temptation at all! We were just brought to such a state that what might have ruined us, before, we would not then look at. “No,” we have said, “if you had offered me this some time ago it might have been accepted. But now God has, by some mysterious influence of His Spirit, turned my heart in another direction and it is not even a temptation to me at all—not worthy of a moment’s thought!” So God delivers His people from the snare of the fowler.  
But the second thought was that God delivers His people, even when they get into the snare. Alas, my Hearer, you and I know something about the net! We have been inside it! We have not only seen it spread, we have been in its folds! We know something about the cage, for we have, unfortunately, been in the cage ourselves, even since we have known the Lord. The fowler’s hand has been upon our neck—it has only been the Sovereign Grace of God that has prevented him from utterly destroying us. What a blessed thing it is, that if the Believer shall, in an evil hour, go into the net, yet God will bring him out of it! Poor Christian and Hopeful got into the fowler’s net when they entered into the castle of Giant Despair. But the key of promise picked the lock and they escaped. They were in the fowler’s net, too, when Flatterer cast a net over them and left them in the lane. But there came one who, after he had beaten them full sore, took the net off and they went on their way, better men than they were before they were in the net! I know one who is in the net now. Some bird, one of God’s own ones, too, has been taken in the snare. He is now groaning and crying out because, alas, alas, he has sinned! I have a person here, a good man, a professor of religion and a truly worthy one! But alas, he has sinned and at this hour the tears are in his eyes and he is saying—  
*“The tumult of my thoughts  
Does but increase my woe!  
My spirit languishes, my heart  
Is desolate and low!  
Turn, turn You to my soul—  
Bring Your salvation near!  
When will Your hand release my feet  
Out of the deadly snare?”*  
O Backslider, be cast down, but do not despair! God will restore you yet. Wanderer though you have been, hear what He says! “Return, O backsliding children, I will have mercy upon you.” But you say you cannot return. Then here is still another Promise—“Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.” You shall yet be brought out from all the evil into which you have fallen and though you shall never cease to repent your ways even to your dying day, yet He that has loved you will not cast you away! He will receive you! He will admit you into His dwelling place and will even now restore you to the number of His people and give you joy and gladness—that the bones which He has broken may rejoice. “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”  
There have been very remarkable instances of God delivering His people out of the snare of the fowler, as the following illustration will show—  
“A young lady who belonged to a Church in the city of New York, married a young man who was not a Christian. He was a merchant, engaged in a lucrative business and the golden stream of wealth flowed in upon him till he had amassed a large fortune. He accordingly retired from business and went into the country. He purchased a splendid residence. Fine trees waved their luxuriant foliage around it. Here was a lake filled with fish and there a garden full of rare shrubbery and flowers. Their house was fashionably and expensively furnished. And they seemed to possess all of earth that mortal could desire. Thus prospered and plied with an interchange of civilities among her gay and fashionable neighbors, the piety of the lady declined and her heart became wedded to the world. And it is not to be wondered at that her three children, as they grew up, imbibed her spirit and copied her example. ‘A severe disease,’ it is said, ‘demands a severe remedy.’ And that God soon applied. One morning intelligence came that her little son had fallen into the lake and was drowned. The mother’s heart was pierced with affliction and she wept and murmured against the Providence of God. Soon afterwards, her only daughter, a blooming girl of sixteen, was taken sick of a fever and died. It seemed, then, as if the mother’s heart would have broken. But this new stroke of the rod of a chastening Father seemed but to increase her displeasure against His will! The only remaining child, her eldest son, who had come home from college to attend his sister’s funeral, went out into the fields, soon afterwards, for the purpose of hunting. In getting over a fence, he put his gun over first to assist himself in springing to the ground, when it accidentally discharged itself and killed him! What, then, were that mother’s feelings? In the extravagance of her grief, she fell down, tore her hair and raved like a maniac against the Providence of God. The father, whose grief was already almost insupportable, when he looked upon the shocking spectacle and heard her frenzied ravings, could endure his misery no longer. The iron entered into his soul and he fell dead, victim to his accumulated afflictions! From the wife and mother, her husband and all her children were now taken away. Reason returned and she was led to reflection. She saw her dreadful backslidings, her pride, her rebellion. And she wept with the tears of a deep repentance. Peace was restored to her soul. Then would she lift up her hands to Heaven, exclaiming, ‘I thank you, O Father!—the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away and blessed be the name of the Lord.’ Thus did her afflictions yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Her Heavenly Father had chastened her, “not for His pleasure but for her profit, that she might become partaker of His holiness.”

So God delivered her soul out of the snare of the fowler. She started afresh in the ways of righteousness, serving God with diligence and zeal and growing up in His fear. By trouble and trial, by some means or another, God will surely deliver His people out of the snare of the fowler, even when they are in it!  
III. And now, to conclude, I am to dwell for a moment or two upon that word, “SURELY.” The assurance of every Truth of Scripture is the beauty of it. If it were not sure, it were not precious. And it is precious because it is sure.  
Now, it says, “Surely He shall deliver you.” Why? First because He has promised to do it and God’s Promises are bonds that were never yet dishonored! If He has said He will, He will. Secondly, because Christ Jesus has taken an oath that He will do it. In ages long gone, Christ Jesus became the Shepherd of the sheep and the Surety of them, too. “If any of them perish,” He said, “at My hand you shall require it,” and, therefore, because Christ is responsible, because He is the Heavenly Sponsor for all God’s people, they must be kept—for otherwise Christ’s bond were forfeited and His oath were null and void. They must be kept, again, because otherwise the union that there is between all of them and Christ would not be a real one! Christ and His Church are one—one body. But if any of the members of my body were cut off, I should be maimed—and if Christ could lose one of His children, He would be a maimed Christ. “We are His body, the fullness of Him that fills all-in-all.” If, then, the whole Church were not gathered in, Christ would be an incomplete Christ, seeing He would lack His fullness. They must all be saved, for God has determined that they shall be and the Son has sworn they shall be and God the Holy Spirit vouches they shall be! None of God’s people shall be cast away, or else the Bible is not true. The whole stability of the Everlasting Covenant rests on their final perseverance! The whole Covenant of Grace rests on this—  
*“He shall present our souls  
Unblemished and complete  
Before the glory of His face  
With joys divinely great.”*  
And therefore they must be preserved out of the snare of the fowler because otherwise the Covenant would be null and void. If one should perish, the oath would be broken. If one should be cast away, the Covenant would be void. And therefore they must be kept secure—  
*“His honor is engaged to save  
The meanest of His sheep!  
All that His Heavenly Father gave,  
His hands securely keep!”*  
I have no time to enlarge upon that subject, which is big with glory and might afford a topic for many discourses. I now close up by saying, Brothers and Sisters—is this Promise yours? “Surely He shall deliver you.” Are you the person? “How can I tell?” you ask. Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you, as a guilty sinner, cast yourself wholly on the blood and righteousness of the Immaculate Redeemer? I do not ask you whether you are a Wesleyan, a Churchman, a Baptist, an Independent, or a Presbyterian—my only question is, Are you born-again? Have you passed from death unto life? Are you “a new creature in Christ Jesus”? Is all your trust put in the Lord Jesus Christ? Has His life become your model and does His Spirit dwell in your mortal body? If so, peace be unto you! This Promise is yours! You may have been the worst of men, but if you have faith in Christ, those sins are all forgiven and you may take this Promise to be yours forever! But if you are self-righteous, selfsufficient, ungodly, careless, worldly—there is no such promise for you— you are in the snare, you shall be there and you shall perish, unless you repent, for it is written, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” May God save you from perishing by giving you an interest in the blood of Christ! And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be Glory forever and ever. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1122 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FRESH GRACE CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED  
NO. 1122

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 20, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”  
Psalm 92:10.**

DAVID IS very positive. He does not say, “I hope I shall be anointed with fresh oil and I have a pleasing expectation that it may be so.” But he speaks of his future as absolutely certain—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” Nor will it appear at all wonderful that he should be so positive if you read the Psalm, for his subject there is the ever-living and all-sufficient God. And when we get near to God we get into the region of positive certainty. While we depend upon man we are in the realm of, “maybe,” and, “hope,” and, “perhaps”—but when we come to rest in God we are far removed from everything that is of chance and conjecture. Our God is the God of Truth and Righteousness. “He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

Man is but a treacherous quicksand where confidence is shipwrecked, but the Lord is a haven of security. We do well neither to boast in ourselves nor to place our reliance on the promises of our fellow creatures. But we may wisely boast in the great “I AM,” and rest our souls securely upon His Word and His love. He can neither change nor fail. “He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent.” David, therefore, felt quite at his ease about the future. He felt certain that God, who had given him a measure of Grace, would give him more Grace. He entertained no suspicion that God’s great resources would run out, or that God would withhold them from His own. He says, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Beloved, let us draw near to God and so let us drink at the wellhead which can never be dried up. Let us give up looking to the broken cisterns which do but mock us and let us turn to the inexhaustible deep which lies under, which is always ready to overflow for our need. Let us think, at this time of the confidence of David and we shall remark upon it thus. First, it was a confidence full of meaning—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil,” is a most expressive utterance. Secondly, it was a confidence exceedingly wellgrounded. Thirdly, it was a confidence which calmed his fear. And fourthly, it excited his hopes. And in the last place, if we possess it, it is a confidence which will lead us to pity those who are destitute of it.

I. THE CONFIDENCE HERE EXPRESSED IS FULL OF MEANING. What did he intend by saying, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil”? He meant, first, that his strength should be renewed. It was a common belief among the Orientals that anointing with oil added to a man’s vigor. They regarded it as the symbol of renewed strength. So David felt and knew that God would, whenever it was required, renew his strength. Times of weakness will happen to us all. A great strain may be put upon us and we may become exhausted. Or, under severe depression of spirit, we may imagine ourselves to be ready to die. But at all such times God will supply strength to us—our extremity will be His opportunity—our time of famine will be His hour of plenty.

Is not His strength made perfect in weakness? Is it not written that “He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increases strength”? David sung in the 103rd Psalm, “He satisfies my mouth with good things; so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s,” and he expected it always to be so. “He restores my soul,” he says in the 23rd Psalm. Often do his Psalms, which commence in painful depression, conclude with exultation because heavenly love had poured fresh life into his swooning soul. From many a soul-sickness had the son of Jesse been recovered. From many a sinking had he been lifted up into holy joy. He here expresses his conviction that the Lord would always deal thus graciously with him. Expect this, then, my Brothers and Sisters, that God will give you new strength as you shall require it. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “He gives more Grace.” Go to Him in the time of your weakness, in the confidence of this text—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

David meant, in the second place, that he should be afresh assured of the Divine favor. To anoint a man with oil was a token of his welcome to your house. His feet were washed that he might be refreshed and then the notable guest, worthy of special honor, was anointed with perfumed nard. So David says that as he had received tokens of Divine favor before, he should receive them yet again. O Beloved, you know what it is to revel in the smiles of God and find a Heaven in His manifested love! You have basked in the sunlight of your Father’s love many a time and felt an ecstasy such as worldlings cannot imagine! Has not the Lord been pleased to make the name of Jesus to your souls “like ointment poured forth”? Oftentimes has He brought you into His banqueting house and His banner over you has been love. He has made for you a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined.

You look back upon these seasons with inexpressible delight and perhaps at this moment you are saying, “Oh, that it were with me as in months past.” Pluck up courage, my Brothers and Sisters—you shall be “anointed with fresh oil.” There are more tokens of love awaiting you. Further signs of your Master’s love shall be afforded you. You need not cry with Esau, “Have you but one blessing? Bless me, even me, O my Father,” for the Lord abounds in blessings and He delights to bestow them upon His Beloved. Yes, there are even richer mercies yet to come! The past, though full of blessedness, shall be eclipsed by the happy future. David had the favor of God as a shepherd boy. He found it anew as a warrior and he had yet other tokens when he became king in Israel. Every favor received is a pledge of more to follow.

Dawn is the earnest of noon. Within the sacred circle of fellowship to which you have already penetrated, there is a holy of holies of yet closer communion and there you shall soon enter. “Friend, come up higher,” is your Lord’s sweet invitation. Have faith and be of good cheer, for you shall see greater things than these. You shall be baptized again into the Holy Spirit. You shall receive anew the spirit of adoption and your joy shall be full. Therefore lift up your head.

But again, David meant that he should be confirmed in his estate. It is noteworthy that David was anointed three times. First of all by Samuel, in prospect of his ultimately becoming king. A second time by the men of Judah, when he reigned over a part of the nation. And a third time at Hebron, when the whole Israelite nation came together and David was solemnly elected to be their king. Perhaps he remembered this, and looking upon those various anointings as confirmations of his kingly state, he felt that God would yet further confirm him upon his throne all his days. Many were the rebellions against David’s authority, but they were all futile. When his throne was shaken by his rebellious son, Absalom, and his government almost annihilated, yet God restored him to the throne again, and in fact, anointed him once more.

Now this day, Beloved, you and I, who are Believers in Jesus, are kings and priests unto God. But if Satan could do it, he would soon bring our kingdom and priesthood to an end. He is plotting and devising by all manner of means to work our destruction. But it is written, “You maintain My lot.” The great Keeper of our Head is one who can never be overcome. The Lord, who has set us on the throne with His Son, will neither suffer His Son nor us to be driven from it. The Lord reigns and while the Lord reigns His people shall also reign. “Because I live, you shall live, also,” is the Word of Jesus, and upon that Word He has caused our souls to hope. He will confirm you again, my Brothers and Sisters, in your sonship. He will make you again to say, “Abba, Father,” with an unfaltering tongue. He will confirm you in your position as a member of His body. He will make you feel that the anointing of the Head is still descending upon you and you shall thus rejoice again and again in full assurance that what God has made you, you shall be even to the end. Thus, again, you see, the Lord anoints His people with fresh oil, by confirming them in their estate.

Furthermore, David meant that he should be qualified for his office by the bestowal of fresh Grace. This was, no doubt, the meaning of the anointing of a king. It was the type and token of his receiving royal wisdom and authority. So, too, in the anointing of a priest, it was the symbol of the Spirit of God being given to him that he might discharge his sacred office. David felt that he should frequently need to be taught of God, guided, enlightened and instructed, so that he might, as king and leader in Israel, act rightly. Therefore he says, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” Beloved, this is a very sweet confidence for us. If you are a minister of the Gospel you will have a thousand times for feeling yourself to be incompetent. And you might well throw down the staff of your pastorate and leave work if you were not sure that your sufficiency is of God.

In such work as the instruction of the young, the visitation of the sick and the reclaiming of the fallen, or whatever it is that God has called you to, you will frequently tremble as you discover, more and more, your own unfitness to be used of God. But this will be counterbalanced by learning more and more the Divine faithfulness. Do not relinquish your work because of your feebleness, for you shall be anointed with fresh oil! Do you need wisdom? Ask it of the Lord, for He gives liberally. Do you need a warm and zealous spirit? Are you conscious of growing cold? Some drops of His dear love falling into your heart will set it on a blaze and make you as earnest as you would desire. Do you need more power in prayer? Go to Him who understood the art of wrestling on the mountainside at midnight and He will teach you how to pray. Is there anything you lack in order to the full discharge of the ministry to which God has called you? Wait upon the Lord for it with unwavering faith and He will grant it to you, and you “shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Once more, I think David meant that he should also have new cause for delight. Anointing with oil was intended to give pleasure. The element of joy in religion is looked upon with indifference by some, but they are unwise. There are some, nowadays, who would like to strike out everything from mortal life which gives pleasure. We have societies, now, which are anti to every mortal thing that is pleasant and agreeable. And if there remains one solitary enjoyment to mortal men in this vale of tears which has not some society opposed to it, I have no doubt some genius will commence a crusade against it tomorrow. The theory is that all wholesome things are nasty and that all gratifications are deadly. I wonder they do not make the parish pump run with wormwood tea and paint the meadows a dun color.

Then, when we have abstained from all that is either beautiful or agreeable and reduced ourselves to the condition of the savage who eats acorns and lives in a cave, we shall have climbed somewhat near perfection. Now I do not believe in this theory for ordinary life, much less for spiritual life. Men used, of old, to anoint the heads of their guests to give them pleasure and they were never blamed for it. And the Lord intends that His people should have the richest pleasures in their souls. He is the happy God and would have those round about Him happy. He never intended this world to be a great workhouse, a vast drill-shed, or a convict settlement so arranged that labor should banish joy and a crushing sense of subjection should chase away love. He has made this world to be a happy lodging for His dear children till He shall call them Home. And He has provided for their delight many enjoyments, lawful and commendable, beneficial and spiritual.

I believe the Lord intended His people to be the happiest people under the sun. When I see certain of them repining, complaining, fretting, worrying and calling that state of mind, “experience,” I pray, “Lord, save me from that experience, and give me to have Your joy fulfilled in me.” Our Lord Jesus was sorrowful, not as our example, but as our Substitute. He was put to grief that we might be joyous. He bore our load that we might have no load to carry. He was full of cares for us, that we might have no care but might rejoice in Him all our days. “Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.” “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” The atmosphere we breathe should be fragrant with thankful joy. Like flowers, we ought to load each breeze with the sweet perfume of holy gratitude.

We which have believed do enter into rest, and in that rest we discover new joys each day. The banks of the river, the streams which make glad the city of God are not dark with weeping willows, or dreary with a jungle of thorns and thistles, but they are lovely with the rose of Sharon and the lilies of the valley! And among their shady groves the righteous lie down at peace and sing their song of loves touching their Well-Beloved. Yes, we did rejoice, we have rejoiced, and we mean to rejoice again! “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Put all those five thoughts together and you have a great text before you, too big for me to preach from, but it may furnish you with many a theme for thought. It is a bough with many clusters—eat thereof and be glad!

II. THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR TEXT IS WELL-GROUNDED because it is grounded upon God. We could not reckon upon having supplies all our lives if we depended upon the granaries of Egypt, or upon the storehouses of the wealthiest of the land. But when we rest in God we may boast ourselves as we may. I stood the other day, as you have often done, by a spring, pleased to see it constantly bubble up with cool, refreshing water. One who came there to fetch water for her house, said to me, “It is always the same, Sir, always the same. I never knew the sharpest frost to freeze it, or the most burning summer to dry it. The stream is equally full at all times in the year.”

This was very different from a fountain which I often pass, which more than half the year bears the notice, “This drinking fountain is closed during the winter.” And very different from those brooks in our own and other lands which live upon the rains and therefore do not contain a drop of water in time of drought. Why does the spring always remain the same? Because it has tapped the great fountains. There is a deep that couches beneath. There are vast secret reservoirs in the heart of the earth and if you can set these abroach you are sure of a perpetual supply. Many a man has his water laid on, as it were, from the water company—his dependence is on man—and therefore it fails him. Or he depends on the circumstances which surround him and therefore he finds his confidence to be as a deceitful brook. But if you live upon God and say, “All my fresh springs are in You,” you have tapped the eternal deep, and you never need be afraid of drought. You shall drink draughts of living water—you shall

be anointed with oil.

Beloved, it is a grand thing to be thrown flat on God, however hard the fall! It is a glorious thing to hang upon the eternal arm with nothing else to hold you up. Just as yon unpillared arch of Heaven never starts or quivers, notwithstanding that it is without a buttress, so does faith, when it is built on God, stand gloriously serene in its mighty strength. “Trust you in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” We are quite sure of fresh supplies because of our union to Christ. Every Christian is a part of Christ, for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Now there can be no fear that my little finger will not be supplied so long as the head is nourished. If the head shall have sufficient nutriment, so shall the meanest member of the body and because we are one with Christ we shall therefore receive daily Grace.

Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure and the sacred oil descends to the very skirts of His garments. And because, without measure, the Spirit rests upon Him, therefore every one of us who belong to Him shall be anointed with fresh oil. Why does the branch of the tree expect to live? It sends out no roots into the earth. It makes no search for nourishment among the rocks and stones. No, but the branch expects to live because the sap flows into the stem and from the stem to itself. And we expect Grace because it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. Oh, if we had a pinched and starveling Christ, we might expect to run short! But with One in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily we can have no cause for fear. If I have such a Christ as this, I must be anointed with fresh oil!

Again, we have another reason. We must have fresh Grace because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. It was a good day for the poor widow of Zarephath upon which Elijah came to live with her. If I had been in her place I should have felt that I was safe enough, for if God did not think of me He would think of Elijah, and if Elijah lived in my house and went shares with me, I should not need to cry over that little meal in the barrel or that drop of oil in the cruse. I should feel, “Since Elijah lives with me, I shall share with Elijah. Elijah’s God will take care of him, and I shall be taken care of also.” O child of God, who is it that lives in your body along with you? Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? And while the Holy Spirit lives within shall there ever be famine in the soul? Shall the cruse of oil fail? Shall the barrel of meal be entirely empty while the Holy Spirit is in us? It cannot be! Beloved, how many forget that precious doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit in every Believer. And yet, if we did but realize it, we should feel that while He who is the anointing oil dwells in our hearts, we must be anointed with fresh oil. There can be no fear about that.

Moreover, look at the promises of God’s Word and they will, at once, assure us that we shall have fresh supplies of Grace according to our need. You do not need that I quote them to you this morning—they are legion—but I will tell you what I experienced, myself, in reference to those promises. They are to me a gradual Revelation. Not but what they are all in the Book, now, but I cannot realize and grasp, and understand them except by degrees. I find a promise exactly suitable for me today, but there is another. I love it and bless God for it already, but I cannot get the sweetness of it today, it is reserved for days to come. I shall find it open to me tomorrow. Another is laid up for me in six months’ time and another in five years’ time. The promises are fruits laid up to ripen in time to come and as most fruits become ripest and sweetest in the winter, so have we found that God’s promises have a peculiar mellowness in our times of distress and affliction, such a sweetness as we did not perceive in the summer days of our prosperity.

The train which starts from London to go to the North continues to traverse the distance day by day—how is it supplied with water? Why, there are trenches between the rails in several different places and from these the engine drinks as it rushes along its iron pathway. It is supplied as it runs! That is just what our heavenly Father has done for you. You are just like an engine on the road to Heaven and between here and Heaven there are many stores of Grace awaiting you. You will take up fresh water without slacking your speed and so will be able to keep on to your journey’s end. To use another illustration, when the Eastern nations used to trade across the desert in the olden times, in Solomon’s days for instance, there were stations built, wells sunk and provisions stored at convenient halting places, so that the caravans might pause and take in fresh provisions. The caravans reached their journey’s end because the long way was broken up by a series of resting places. Now, the promises are resting places for us between here and Heaven. There is a long line of them at well-ordered intervals and as we journey through this desert world we shall be constantly coming, first to one, and then to another, and then another, and another, and so we shall find fresh provision stored up that we may not fail. The manna will fall daily till we come to Canaan. The promises of God are so numerous that we are sure we “shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Once more, Beloved, up till now our experience has proved that we shall be anointed with fresh oil because we have been so anointed many a time already. I appeal to you who have gone for many years forward in the pathway where Jesus leads you. Have you not known many times of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord? You have had times of great depression, for changes are appointed us as long as we are here. Men may promise themselves they shall never see a change, but they are greatly mistaken. David said, “My mountain stands firm. I shall never be moved,” but in a very little time he sang another hymn. When I hear Brothers and Sisters so very confident that they shall never doubt again, I am reminded of a story I have heard of the olden times, when a young gentleman who had never traveled before went over Hounslow Heath and was accosted by another gentleman who rode by his side, and joined in an interesting conversation.

Our friend said at last, “I have always been told by my father that this is a very dangerous heath, but the old gentleman, I think, was exceedingly nervous, for we have come all this way without being molested by highwaymen.” “Yes,” said the other, “but now is the time for you to stop and deliver.” And he clapped his pistol to his ear. It often happens, when we say, “I shall have no more temptations,” that our very confidence is, in itself, a temptation! O yes, there have been times of sore trial, but the Lord has appeared for us. Up to this moment not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised—

*“Thus far we prove the promise good  
Which Jesus ratified with blood.”*

We have no fault to find with our God. Jehovah Jireh, the Lord has provided to this day. In the mount of the Lord shall it be seen. Up to now, the Lord has helped us. Well, then, if He has done so up till now, so will He, for He is an unchangeable God. Therefore let us be assured that we “shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

III. THIS CONFIDENCE CALMS ALL OUR FEARS. Sometimes, when we are not quite as we should be, we are filled with fear on account of our soul poverty. What a poor thing I am. How little Grace I have. How weak in prayer. How slow in service. How frequently depressed. How easily tossed to and fro. How shall I hope to hold on to the end? Where is the answer to it—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” I am poor, but I shall receive my daily pension. I am weak and I have no strength in reserve, but my strength is laid up in God!

Imagine two Israelites talking together one day, and one of them says to the other, “Your cupboard seems to be very empty, I fear you are imprudent.” “But,” says the other, “do you know we gathered this morning an omer full of manna and it exactly supplied my family. I have a wife and a troop of boys with mighty appetites and very soon the omer which had been full was empty, but we look for more tomorrow.” “Nothing in the house?” said the other. “Do you not feel distressed?” “No, not at all.” “Why not?” “Because I believe the manna will fall tomorrow morning and that there will be just as much as I shall need, so that I have no need to lay by any in store.”

“Very imprudent,” said the other. “I believe we ought to make hay while the sun shines. If you will come to my house, I will show you the good stock of manna which I have carefully laid by.” “No,” said the other, “I do not care to see it just now. But I will tell you what I will do, I will come down tomorrow at dinner time and see it.” So the man gathered in the morning his own fresh manna and his family was satisfied with it and delighted. And after they had eaten, he said, “I will go down and see my rich friend’s manna. He was much better off last night than I was.” He goes to his friend’s door, but his friend does not seem pleased to see him. “I have come to see your manna that you stored up so carefully.”

But the other blushes and admits that he has none to show. “Why not?” his friend enquires. “Well, the fact is, I do not want you to come into my tent at all. I must come forth from it myself. There is a most detestable smell all through the tent. I had to take away the manna and bury it, for it bred worms and stank.” “Ah,” said the other, “then, after all, I did well to live upon daily manna and to have no stock in hand. And you did foolishly to lay by a store.” Now there may be some professors here who want to feel that they are strong enough for tomorrow, or that they have Grace enough for next week—they want to have such a proportion of Divine strength given them that they shall feel confident about themselves for years to come. All that will breed worms and stink—all human confidence, glory and pride must rot!

But if you remain a poor sinner and nothing at all, daily depending on the bounty of God, you will have Grace from Heaven fresh and fresh, smelling of the hand which gives it every morning. Beloved, it calms our fears about our poverty when we remember that the granary of Heaven is not exhausted and that as each morning breaks we shall find the dew of Grace lying about our tent. This also removes our fears concerning violent temptations. We must, all of us, have felt afraid of being tempted. We are taught to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” Sometimes our unbelief says, “If I am tempted in a certain way I shall certainly perish.”

My Brothers and Sisters, you should remember that you will be anointed with fresh oil! When the temptation comes there will be a way of escape for you. What a happy circumstance it is for Christians that it is not often that the temptation and the opportunity come together. Have not you noticed that when wrong desires stir in your mind, they come to you at times when you cannot carry them out? And at other times when you have the opportunity to sin fairly before you, you have no desire for it whatever! That is often a way of escape for God’s people. Do not be distressed about temptations. There will be such in this world. Lay hold on the shield of your faith and you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One.

But it may be you are afraid not merely of temptation, but of backsliding, and that is a very blessed fear, but do not let it depress you, for you will be anointed with fresh oil. If you had to keep yourself, you would certainly perish. If you had to sustain your own spiritual vigor, it would not be long before you would faint. But since you depend upon God and He has to preserve you, He will not suffer you to leave Him. Or if for a while you should depart from His way, He will bring your wandering heart back and set you in the King’s highway once more. Or it is possible you are afraid of some great and grievous affliction. I know dear Sisters who are aware that a certain disease is upon them which will one day come to such a point that either there will be a painful operation or else they may die.

Dear Sisters, do not fret about it. You have not sufficient strength for what is coming, but you will be anointed with fresh oil! Nobody needs tomorrow’s Grace today. When you are only up to your ankles in trouble

you do not require the Grace which you will have when you are up to your neck in it. You shall have Grace in proportion. You shall have ballast for your sail, and sail for your ballast, for He is a good Captain who intends to steer you into port. Do not be cast down, therefore. Some of us, it may be, have been troubled about the future death of some dear one upon whom we depend, or whose life is very precious to us. We have buried them a hundred times over in our fears. Let us remember that when the trouble comes it will be time enough for us to be cast down by it—no, we shall not be cast down—for God, who helps those who are cast down, will comfort us. “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

And perhaps, dear Brothers or Sisters, you have entered upon a new state of sorrow. You wear today the name of widow, which you never wore before. Or, you are now called an orphan for the first time. In this new state resort to God to be anointed with fresh oil! He who made you a good wife will help you to bear well the trial of losing your husband. He who made you a dutiful child will be a Father to you and help you to sustain the position of an orphan well. You shall be anointed with fresh oil whenever affliction comes. I feel as if I could sit down now and say to myself, “Cheer up, Heart, cheer up. Whatever ails you, you shall be anointed with fresh oil. Look into the future—no, do not care to look into it—do not wish to look into the book of fate and see—

*‘What gloomy lines wait for you,*

*Or what bright scenes arise.’*  
You shall be anointed with fresh oil.” This is a heavenly forecast of our nativity. We shall be anointed with fresh oil right to the end of our journey and when death comes, if come it ever shall—for Christ may come and we may not die—we shall be anointed with fresh oil!

Very wonderful is the way in which God takes His people to Himself! Two good men have lately gone to Heaven in a manner which rebuked their own prayers. They were taught in their Church to say, and did say twice every Sunday for more than 50 years, “Lord, deliver us from sudden death.” Dear good men, the Lord knew it was a stupid prayer and Mr. Robert Aitken, who had for many years served his Lord, fell down dead on the railway platform and Mr. Pennefather dropped from his chair into Heaven! The Lord seemed to say to them, “Why did you ask Me to save you from sudden death? It was the best for you and I gave it to you.”

To die in the pulpit preaching—to go straight from testifying about Christ below to seeing Him above—what better thing could be desired?! Do not be afraid of dying—either you will be taken away gently, perhaps in your very sleep, and will never know you died at all—or, if you have to lie a little while and linger, you will be anointed with fresh oil and you will turn your dying bed into a chariot of fire! You will be transfigured there in the presence of your family and they will wonder that the Grace of God could do such great things for a poor, weak, trembling mortal. “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”  
IV. Now I must pass over the next point very briefly—THIS ASSURANCE TENDS TO RAISE OUR HOPES. We tremble lest we should not hold on to the end, but now we know we shall be anointed with fresh oil we are filled with hope. Sometimes, when we meet with Believers who are full of Grace, full of patience, full of courage, full of zeal, full of love, we say, “I can never get where they are.” Yes, we can, for we shall be anointed with fresh oil and if we obtain fresh Grace there is no place of eminence we cannot reach. What Abraham was, what David was, what Isaiah was, what Paul was, we may be. There is nothing in the whole range of Christian attainment from which we are debarred.

This raises our hope for useful service. Perhaps we have not done much for the Lord yet, or, having done something in our youth, are growing dull now and do not honor Him as we once did. Come, we won’t give up and say, “I shall never serve the Lord,” but we will rejoice that we shall be anointed with fresh oil! We have seen trees bear very little fruit for years, but they will have a splendid year, by-and-by, and then they will be loaded with fruit. Sometimes an old tree feels dead and yet at the scent of water it does bud and bring forth fruit once more. So some of you may be like a dry, barren tree, but the Lord means to visit you and you shall bring forth fruit to His name. I would say to every Brother here who is conscious that he has neglected a great deal of what he ought to have done and has not been as useful as he should, “Come, Brother, mend your ways and have good hope of brighter times to come for you shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Once more, this gives us hope of the fullest fellowship with Christ. Where John was when he leaned his head on His Master’s bosom, I may be. Where Mary was when she sat at the Master’s feet, I may be, if “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” Come, lift up your heads, you birds of Heaven! Do not sit moping! Lift up your heads, I say, and look the sun in the face, the glorious Sun of Righteousness, and rise with all your wings towards Him. He will bear you up! He will draw you to Himself! Does He not even now attract you by His own superlative beauties? “Come with Me from Lebanon, My Spouse,” says He, “with Me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana.” Up, up Christian! Higher, higher, higher! The Lord will help you, He will give you new strength and the highest place of devotion, the loftiest elevation of piety shall be attained by you.

V. Lastly, THIS MAKES US FEEL GREAT PITY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT HOPE TO BE ANOINTED WITH FRESH OIL. And such are all who are destitute of faith. You have your choice. You who do not believe in the unseen, you have your choice in the seen things which you can see and hear. They are before you and you are very fond of them, and you think they fill your spirit. So they may for the present, but there are evil times coming. The young man’s youth will not last forever. Eyes grow dim, as every old man will tell you. The joys of youth will not come to your rescue then! The remembrance of those early joys, as past and gone forever, will only make your cup more bitter.

And going down gradually to your grave, discontented and fretful, striving, still, to gratify passions for which you have no strength. Looking again to broken cisterns and finding only a little mud at the bottom where once you found what you thought crystal waters, you will begin to cry out for fresh comforts. But you will not find them. It is a blessed thing to be so rich that there is no end to your wealth and nobody can say that but a Christian! It is a blessed thing to have a stream at your feet which will never fail—and nobody has such a river but a Christian!

If you believe in God, God is yours and all that your soul can ever need is treasured up in the Infinite God, for life, for death, for judgment, for eternity. Without God you are naked, poor and miserable already in the highest sense, but what will you be hereafter? Oh, the poverty of a man who lives without Christ! But oh, the poverty of the man who dies without Christ! Oh, the utter, utter poverty of a man who will live throughout eternity without Christ! He is a naked soul and the blasts of wrath shall smite upon him without pause. He is a thirsty soul—oh, how he thirsts! But no drop of consolation will ever come to him.

He is a crushed and broken soul, but there is no one to heal his broken heart, nor stanch his ghastly wounds. He is forever destroyed and banished from the Presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. And to that destruction no restoration can ever come! To that agony no relief! To that death no resurrection! Today Christ is to be had! Today all that your soul needs is to be had! And to be had for nothing! To be had for the asking! To be had for the accepting, for whoever believes in Him receives Him, and so is saved—

*“But if your ears refuse  
The language of His Grace,  
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews, That unbelieving race.  
The Lord in vengeance dressed,  
Will lift His hand and swear,  
You that despised My promised rest  
Shall have no portion there!”*

God grant it may not be so, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.  
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 40.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1649 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FRESHNESS  
NO. 1649

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 16, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.” Job 29:20.  
“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”  
Psalm 92:10.**

THE first text tells us of the renown of Job and of the way in which the Providence of God continued to maintain the glory of his estate, his bodily health and his prosperity. He was for many days, months, years, continuously prospered of God. Everything to which he set his hand succeeded. God had set a hedge about him and all that he had, so that none broke through to molest him. He grew richer, he grew more influential, he had more honor in the sight of his fellow men each morning that he walked to the gate. In every way he was advanced from day to day and that throughout a long stretch of years. His glory was fresh in him. He did not achieve a hasty fame and then suddenly become forgotten. He did not blaze out like a meteor and then vanish into darkness, but he seemed to be continually fresh, vigorous, strong, energetic and successful.

He says that his bow was renewed in his hand, whereas a bow usually loses its force by use and is less able to shoot arrows after a little while and needs to lie still with a slack string—but it was by no means so with Job. He could send one arrow and then another and then another—and the bow seemed to gather strength by use! That is to say, he never seemed to be worn out in mind or body. Whatever he commenced was commenced with as great a freshness and zest as the last thing which he had accomplished and that had been commenced with the same energy as the first enterprise of his youth. However, this did not always last, for Job, in this chapter, is telling us of something that

 used to be—something that, the loss of, he very sorrowfully deplored—“my glory was fresh in me.” He found himself suddenly stripped of riches and of honor and put last in the list instead of first, while his purposes and aims seemed all to miss their way—and he had no strength and no glory left in him. Now he had reached the winter of his discontent and those who, before, did him homage, became his assailants. So far as glory was concerned, he was forgotten as a dead man out of mind.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this gives us a lesson that we must not put our trust in the stability of earthly things. It is said of the world that God has founded it upon the floods. How, then, can we expect it to be substantial? Beneath yon moon, continually changing, what can we discover that abides the same? Where the very light of Heaven is waxing and waning, what is there but mutability? Change is written upon the face of all things. If, then, you have built your nest on high, reckon not too surely that you shall die in your nest—for the axe may fell the tree and bring it down at an untimely date. If your children are round about you in good health, be not too sure of them, for they may be carried to an early grave—and the parent may yet be childless.

If up to now you have been great in the esteem of men, think less than nothing of that, for the breath of popular applause is more fleeting than a vapor! It scarcely comes before it goes, and they who, yesterday, cried, “Hosanna,” in the streets at your coming, may, before tomorrow’s sun is set, be crying, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” They did that to the Master— marvel not if they do it to the servants! This is the respect that makes all mortal things inconsiderable to a wise man—he scarcely will put them among his treasures—for they melt before they are fairly counted, like a coinage of ice. They are but as the counters that a child plays with, having only an imaginary value. The things which are seen are shadows—the things invisible are the only substances. Reckon, then, at their fit price, this transient glory of wealth, health, or fame. Lay up treasure, “where neither moth nor rust does corrupt,” and seek for stability in other things than these. Get the feet of yours joy upon the Rock of Ages and reckon all else to be but sand at its very best.

David, in the second text is talking, I think, about spiritual things, and he tells us with great joy that he should be anointed with fresh oil. He did not expect that his glory would depart, but he expected that it should be renewed. He did not reckon that the bow would lose its force in his hand, but that God would increase his strength from day to day. And if any of you, here, who are God’s people have any fears about the future as to your soul matters—if you are alarmed with the fear that you will share the same lot which Job shared as to his temporal glory—I would remind you that Job, even in temporals, received at last twice as much as he had in his best. We must remember that God can turn His hand one way as well as another and brighten your prospects as well as darken them! Predict delight rather than despair. Even the lower springs shall continue to flow till you are beyond the need of them!

Just now it is about spiritual matters that I want to speak—and if you have a fear that you must necessarily decline in these—I would remind you of the words of David, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil” and, yet further on, of his other words, “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright.” Never fall into the notion that a spiritual falling off is inevitable—there need be nothing of the kind—you may be fresh as the dew even unto the end! The subject, tonight, will run in this way—First, the excellency of freshness—“My glory was fresh in me.” Secondly, the fear of ill-departure. And, thirdly, the hope of is continuance, which hope is greatly encouraged by the words of our text—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

I. First, then, notice THE EXCELLENCY OF FRESHNESS. “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” David had been anointed, while still a youth, to be king over Israel. He was anointed, yet again, when he came to the kingdom. That outward anointing with actual oil was the testimony of God’s choice and the emblem of David’s authorization. Oftentimes, when his throne seemed precarious, God confirmed him in it and subdued the people under him. When his dominion became weak, God strengthened him and his servants and gave them great victories, so that, as a king, David was frequently anointed with fresh oil. David’s royal brow was crowned with fresh laurels again and again and his throne was settled and established by the hands of the Lord.

It was established, not with the same old stale anointing—a repetition of that which had lost its force—but with oil freshly pressed from the green olive, namely, with a new blessing and a fresh blessing from God’s right hand, as I trust, you and I may be! Freshness is a most delightful thing if you see it in another. It is a charm in Nature. The other day, when the wind blew cold, someone said to me, “Yes, but how fresh the air is and how refreshing—how different from that heavy, muggy atmosphere in which we were half drowned and almost entirely suffocated but a few days ago.” We need something fresh, and when we get it, we are freshened ourselves! How pleasant to go into the garden and see the spring flowers just peeping up. How agreeable to mark the rills, with their fresh water leaping down the hills after showers of rain. The young lambs in the meadows and larks in the sky are delightful because of their freshness. Everything that is fresh seems to have a charm about it to our minds.

But, dear Friends, spiritual freshness has a double charm! Sometimes we know what it is to have a freshness of soul, which is the dew from the Lord. You remember when first your flesh was as that of a new-born child? I mean when you were newly born again and first knew the Lord. How fresh everything was to you! The pardon of sin—how it sparkled! The righteousness of Christ—how brilliant! The idea of being a child of God— how novel and how delightful! To be joint-heir with Christ—how it almost startled you—it was such a new idea to your spirit! And oftentimes since then, when your soul has been in a lively condition, everything has been bright, charming, exhilarating—nothing flat, stale, unprofitable.

Even though you heard the same things said again and again, yet, because your soul was fresh, they came to you with unusual power. Your spiritual food, if you are healthy, is always fresh to you, like the manna in the wilderness which was never stored a single night except for the Sabbath—but fresh and fresh it fell—and Israel gathered it and fed upon it then and there. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have your soul in a fresh state, filled with the ever-flowing Living Water! It is glorious to find everything about you fresh and new through the teaching of the blessed Spirit, so that you go from strength to strength and, like a roe or a young hart, leap from hill to hill! If we are now in the possession of it, may we always keep that freshness of soul and never lose it.

How that freshness is seen in a man’s devotions. Oh, I have heard some prayers that are really musty! I have heard them so often that I dread the old familiar sounds! Some hackneyed expressions I remember hearing when I was a boy. I even now hear the vain repetitions—old, worn-out, good-for-nothing rubbish expressions they were then—but they are still brought out by regular prayer-makers! Even where the words are new and original, you will hear men pray in such a style as to make you say to yourself, “That prayer came out of Noah’s Ark.” As far as that man is concerned, there is nothing at all in it of life, sap, or savor. It has been dead long ago and hung up to dry till not a particle of juice remains in it.

But, on the other hand, you hear a man pray who does pray—whose soul is fully in communion with God—and what life and freshness is there! It may be that his expressions are somewhat rough, but they touch you because they come from his heart. Some of the confessions and petitions are strange to you, perhaps, and yet you feel that they are such strangers as it behooves you to be joyous at once! You are glad that such words and thoughts have passed through your spirit and blessed you! You feel that you can pray with such persons. Their prayers will go to Heaven, for they came from Heaven! God has inspired them and their originality is a part of the manual of the Spirit. I like to hear a Brother even stop and stammer because he cannot go on—his heart is too full and he cannot find words. Oh, but it is blessed to get a little freshness, even if it comes through a breakdown!

I suppose that those dear Friends who pray by the book of Common Prayer, somehow or other manage to put freshness into their prayers. I am always glad that they do, for it shows the vigor of their piety. As for me, I am such a poor, weak thing, that after I have repeated the same words about half-a-dozen times, they do me no good. I must use words that suit the time and suit the state of my heart—and suit my desires and suit my depressions or my joys—and suit my thankful or mournful heart! One seems to need in prayer something fresh, but when the prayer is old and worn—and seems to have been brushed and turned and very little made of it, after all—why, then it does not strike us, or impress us, or help us! I like to feel freshness even in singing a hymn. It may be that we know the words, but then we must put fresh heart into them and feel them over again as much as if we were the authors of them! Then they become a grand vehicle for our praises! How sweet to sing, as it were, a new song! It is a blessed thing to have a freshness about our devotions, be they private or public, exultant or repentant.

And so, dear Friends, it is well to have a freshness about our feelings. I know that we do not hope to be saved by our feelings—neither do we put feeling side by side with faith—yet I should be very sorry to be trusting and yet never feeling. Surely it would be a dead faith! It would be a strange thing to be a living child of God and to have no feelings. I will tell you about feelings as they strike me. Sometimes I have deplored the condition of my heart before God and thought my feelings to be the worst that could be. But what a foolish judge I have been, for in a week’s time I have needed to have those despised feelings over, again, and thought that now, at last, I had fallen into a worse state than before. I am persuaded that we are very poor judges of the value of our own inward feelings, and, perhaps, when we are lowest in our own esteem we are really highest in the sight of God.

And when we feel as if we did not pray, we are praying, and the heart may be wrestling with God more when it fears that it does not pray than when you come down complacently out of yours closet and say, “I know that I have had a good time, for I feel perfectly self-satisfied.” I long for the Truth of God in the inward parts and wisdom in the secret places of the soul. Anything is good which rids us of pretense! Oh to be broken into splinters by the hand of God! And for every grain of dust to cry out to Him! I believe this mode of praying often prospers beyond any other. At any rate, give me not stereotyped pretension to feeling, but fresh feeling. Whether it is joy or sorrow, let it be living feeling, fresh from the deep fountains of the heart! Whether it is exultation or depression, let it be true and not superficial or simulated! I hate the excitement which needs to be pumped up. There is a something delightful, to my mind, in coming to the Throne of Grace, weeping—a something delightful in coming to the Lord’s Supper full of joy and gladness—to come to either place cold and dead is horrible! There is something delicious in knowing that what you feel is true and comes up from the very bottom of your soul. That it has a point and edge about it which proves how sincere it is. God keep us from stale feelings and may He give us freshness of emotion!

I believe, dear Friends, that there is a very great beauty and excellence in freshness of utterance. Do not hinder yourself from that. How I long for it as a preacher! When one has, day after day, to stand before the same assembly and to talk of the things of God, one dreads lest he should be so monotonous and full of repetition that even the things of God should come to be a weariness to God’s own people! I have often thought that if some Brothers who are very careful to speak exceedingly well what they say, should be a little more careless and speak as it comes—letting their heart flow over at their lips spontaneously—then there would be a far greater freshness about their utterance than there is when every sentence smells of the lamp and reeks of midnight oil!

God forbid that we should say a word against the deep study and the profound research of God’s Word, but still, we may get to be so much students that we scarcely speak like practical men who live among the people! By aiming at a very superior style, we may fall into a thoroughly inferior one and all our freshness may be gone. I like, for my part, the wild bird’s note. Men get the bullfinch and teach it to sing a few notes—and then the piping bullfinch is greatly prized. But I have finches outside my window, any one of which will beat any finch in the world that only pipes a note or two, for they pipe much more melodiously, though they were never taught except by God and Nature! There is a range of sweetness about their wild notes that a tutored bird cannot reach. Nature, pure and unsophisticated, is the best instrument for Divine Grace.

I like to hear men speak of God as they have known Him, every man in his own order, and with his own voice. Coming fresh, perhaps, from the very haunts of sin, out of which free Grace has fetched them, let them speak like Israelites fresh from the brick kilns! Coming from the plow-tail or from the forge with all the equipment of their trade about them and speaking just as they are. Without pretending to be anything else than they are and telling of God’s amazing love to them—not quoting the experience of others, but giving out their own—this will be their wisdom and strength! Oh, there is a freshness about that and a great power to catch the ear and to move the heart when God, the Holy Spirit, is present to bless it!

Now, you that have lately been converted, do not go and learn all the pretty phrases that we are accustomed to use. Do not go and sit down at the feet of your dear teacher in the class and feel that you must talk just like he. Strike out your own course. Be yourself! “But I would be odd,” you say. All right—so is your pastor! You need not mind that. You will not be the only odd body about. Be encouraged by that! I think that a little of what people call oddness is just, after all, leaving God’s work alone. All the trees that God makes are odd. The Dutchmen clip them round or make them into peacocks, but that style of gardening is not to our mind.

But some people say, “What a lovely tree!” I say, “What a horribly ugly thing it is.” Why not let the tree grow as God would have it? Do not clip yourselves round or square, but keep your freshness! There will be no two Christians exactly alike if they do that. There should be a freshness, dear Friends, about our labor. We ought to serve the Lord, to-day, with just as much novelty in it as there was 10 years ago. I may even venture to say 30 years ago! Oh, I remember the seriousness with which I went out to preach the first half-dozen sermons I ever preached—and what a burden it was from the Lord! And how I did go at it with all my might? Very clumsily, but still with all my soul and spirit!

And do you remember when you began to teach the class, or began to take your tract district? Did you not pray over it? It seemed almost too good to be true that you should be trusted with doing anything for your Lord and Master! And you did it, oh, so intensely and, therefore, you had God’s blessing! You did it well, though you blundered a good deal, for all your heart was in it, your motive was pure and your faith was childlike. You blundered the right way, for you blundered with your heart and so blundered into other men’s hearts! Your heart was serving God, even in the mistakes you made.

And now, perhaps, you can go round the district and you are pretty well half-asleep over it. And you can teach the class, but there is not the vigor, the force, the energy, the intense desire, the burden that there once was—perhaps not all the joy. You can stand up and preach, dear Brother, and you have got pretty well accustomed to it—and the people have got accustomed to it, too—and they can nearly go to sleep! And you can, too— preach asleep! It is an easy thing to do, if you once learn the wretched art. There is a kind of sleep-walking in preachers—they can talk in their sleep in a very precise way—much more wonderful than walking! You cannot say, “I sleep, but my heart wakes.” The fact is that it is the other way around—“I wake, but my heart sleeps”—and it is a great pity when it comes to be so.

We should pray to God that we may do everything fresh, just as if we had never done it before, only doing it with all the improvements which experience will bring to us! Pray with your children, tonight, as if it were your first prayer with them! Speak with them about their souls as if you had never mentioned the subject before. Talk of Jesus as if you were telling new news! Why, aren’t you? Is it not always glad tidings? Always news fresh from Heaven? May God grant us Grace that, when we come to be gray and when we totter with our staff for very age—we may still tell out the story, if with feebleness of utterance, yet with juvenility of heart— feeling that we are bringing forth fruit even to old age, for the Lord still anoints us with fresh oil!

So much for the beauty and excellence of freshness. It ought to run into everything.

II. Now, dear Friends, in the second place, I will dwell upon the fear of losing it—THE FEAR OF ITS DEPARTURE. I have heard some express the thought that perhaps the things of God might lose their freshness to us by our familiarity with them. I think that the very reverse will turn out to be the case if the familiarity is that of a sanctified heart. In other things, “familiarity breeds contempt,” but in the things of God, familiarity breeds adoration. The man who does not read his Bible much is the man who has a scant esteem of it. But he that studies it both day and night is the very man who will be impressed by its infinitude of meaning till he will be ready to cry, like Jerome, “I adore the infinity of Scripture.”

I know that he that prays most loves prayer most and he that is most occupied with the praises of God is the very person who wishes that he could praise God day and night without ceasing. These things grow on you. Hence I would have no man fear that familiarity with holy things can take away from their freshness and their beauty! You may drink at other wells till you are no longer thirsty, but, strange to say, this all thirstquenching water, nevertheless, produces a much deeper thirst after its own self. He that eats of the Bread of Heaven shall hunger for no other, but shall grow ravenous for it. His capacity for feeding upon it shall be increased by that which he has fed upon. And, whereas at first, the crumbs from under the table might have satisfied him when he knew himself to be but a dog, at last, when he knows himself to be a child of God, he wishes for everything that is set upon the table!—

*“Less than Yourself will not suffice*

*My comfort to restore.”*  
He must have all that is to be had! Such is his desire. Dismiss, then, any fear from your minds about that.

When we first commenced to break bread on every first day of the week, I heard some say that they thought that the coming so often to the Table might take away the impressiveness of the holy feast. Well, I have scarcely ever missed a Sabbath, now, these 20 years, and I never was so impressed with the solemnity and the sweetness of the Master’s Supper as I am now! I feel it to be fresher every time. When it was once a month, I had not half the enjoyment in it, and I think that where friends have the communion once a quarter, or once a year, as in some Churches, they really do not give the ordinance a fair opportunity to edify them. They do not fairly test the value of an ordinance which they so grossly neglect, as it seems to me. No, you may have more, and more, and more, and more of everything that Christ has instituted and ordained, especially more and more of Himself— and the more you have, the more freshness there will be!

“Yes, but we have had a fear, sometimes, that there will be a lack of freshness about ourselves.” Well, that fear is a very natural one. Let me tell you some points on which, I fear, we have good ground of alarm, for we do our best to rob ourselves of all life and freshness. Christian people can lose the freshness of themselves by imitating one another. By adopting as our model some one form of the Christian life other than that which is embodied in the Person of our Lord, we shall soon manufacture a set of paste gems, but the diamond flash and glory will be unknown. Many godly people have a very deep sense of their corruption and inward sin and this, together with sorrowful spirit, combines to make them a rather gloomy race. Often deeply taught in other respects, they fail to rejoice in the Lord.

Certain of these have formed a school and they have set up a standard and judge everybody to be a deceiver or a mere babe in Grace who cannot groan as deep down as they can. This is not wise. If you do that, you will lose your freshness, for you will forever be scattering your dust and ashes over all the joys of your life. Why should the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the Bridegroom is with them? Let us be happy while we may! There is another set of Brethren who are always glad and happy, for they are healthy and competently provided for. They think they are out of the way of temptation and so they believe that they are perfect—they also set up a standard and cut down everybody who cannot sing right up into the alto notes as high as they can! Well, you will get stale, too, Brothers and Sisters, whoever you may be, for self-laudation never keeps fresh long!

When we have heard about half-a-dozen brethren boasting that they are nearly perfect, it is about as much as some of us can stomach! I cannot stand above two of them without feeling my boxing propensities set in motion! Poor fools, how have they persuaded themselves to hope that selfpraise will be thought to be the height of piety? It is nauseous, even, to those of us who are prepared to make a measure of excuse for the fervid imaginations of the brethren! Drop into one particular groove and run in it—take up one line of things and stick to it—and you will very soon find yourself as far from freshness as a bit of leather which has been worked on an engine to revolve forever and ever in the same course! The beauty of real life lies much in its variety.

A Brother comes to me on Sunday morning sighing. Thank you, Brother, for that! I am glad that you are in that state, for that is where I am! And we can sympathize with each other. Perhaps tomorrow I meet this same friend and he is full of joy and delight, and I say, “Thank you, Brother, I am glad to meet with somebody who is rejoicing in the Lord. You give me a lift. Now shall I be helped to rejoice in Him, too.” Sometimes, in this pilgrimage to the Celestial City, I join company with a Brother worker who laments that he has many difficulties in dealing with poor sinners. I say to him, “I am glad of that, for I have more difficulties than you, but I see that I am not alone in my anxieties.” Another I meet with says that he has been so happy in meeting with souls that have found the Lord and I reply, “Yes, and I am glad to see you, for I am happy, too, for I have met with many who have just found the Savior.”

These changes and ups and downs are like the delicious variations of the seasons—they are not always autumn, not always spring, not always winter, not always, even, the plenitude of summer. So with our souls, we are never so long in one place as to find monotony in life. No, the monotony is in death—the freshness is in life! These changes and varieties create a splendid freshness which we might not hope to have if we tied ourselves to one man’s chariot and resolved that our experience should be uniformly like his. Another way of spoiling your freshness is by repression. The feebler sort of Christians dare not say, feel, or do, until they have asked their leader’s permission. I have known a little village chapel in which, when the preacher had delivered a sermon, the people did not know whether he was sound or not till they had asked the principal deacon! Or they waited till they got outside and consulted a little knot of good old men and women who had to act as tasters for all the others and give a verdict as to the orthodoxy of the performance! A few good souls thought the sermon to be very sweet—the man seemed to be preaching the Gospel—but they did not like to commit themselves to the tune till they had got the key note. And when they had seen the Brother that led them all, then they knew! If he said that it was all right, why, then it was all right!

Now, dear Friend, if you feel that God is blessing you in any religious exercise, mind that you are blessed and let other people who do not like to be blessed go without it if they must. But as for you, be blessed when you can! Do not be ashamed to enjoy that which others despise. Sit down and quietly feast on the kernel while others are breaking their teeth over the shells. If you feel that you must sing, sing without stint! Why not? In the kitchen—in the parlor—sing! Never mind if remarks are made. Do not worldlings sing to their own liking—why shouldn’t you? If sometimes you feel that you cannot sing, well, then, do not sing! Be yourself and be natural as Divine Grace makes you natural—that is the thing. Let your mind have freedom and do not feel as if you went about in fetters, bound to this and pledged to that!

In the living kingdom of the living God there is no rule that you groan at eight o’clock in the morning and sing at noon; that you sigh at half-past three and get the plenitude of the Spirit at a quarter past seven! Nothing of the kind! It is a free Spirit under whose power we dwell and He comes like the wind and goes like the wind—and acts according to His own pleasure. Lord, uphold me with “Your free Spirit.” Do not repress Him. “Quench not the Spirit.” Yield yourselves to His influences and if you feel inclined to shout, be brave enough to do so—and give the praise to God! This is a successful way of keeping up freshness—to be rid of repression and to be free before God.

If we want to keep up our freshness, however, the main thing is never to fall into neglect about our souls. Do you know what state the man is generally in when you are charmed by his freshness? Is he not in fine health? Some of my dear friends were known to call and see me when I was laid up some time ago—and I am afraid that they did not find much freshness about me, then! On the contrary, they heard much the same old story—weary nights and painful days. I hope I did not display much impatience, but still, the tendency is to give a good deal of telling of what one has to endure! There is not much freshness about that.

But a man is fresh, generally, when he is well and everything is going right within his internal economy. Then he thinks fresh thoughts and uses fresh words, for all around him life is in its flowery age and sparkles like the morning! I am sure that it is so with the soul. When the soul is healthy—when you are feeding on the Bread of Heaven; when you are living near to God; when you are believing the promises and embracing them; when you are getting into the very sunlight of the Lord’s fellowship—oh, it is then that fresh words and striking words not often heard will drop from you! Pearls will fall from your lips if those lips have been with Jesus, and He has kissed you with the kisses of His mouth! Do not neglect yourself, then! Let the fountain of the heart be right and then the freshness will speedily be seen.

I have shown you the things by which a man may lose his freshness— avoid them carefully. Those of you who are workers for God may have a fear that you will lose the freshness of yours utterances—a fear which haunts a good many of us. Now, that may happen to us by our own fault if there is a need of searching the Word of God; if there is a need of fresh acquisitions of sacred knowledge. And it may happen to us, again, if we are always gathering the thoughts of others and do not think, ourselves. Then we shall lose freshness and become mere dealers in second-hand observations. Many thoughtful Brothers and Sisters are afraid that they may lose it through age. It does happen to men, as they grow old, that much of the vivacity of youth departs. And we all know ministers who have lost much of their power to edify because their freshness and variety have gone. It is a sad thing that it should have to be so with any of us, but what a blessed thing it is if we can fall back upon that assurance, “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

Nature decays, but Grace shall thrive. The Holy Spirit will renew our youth. The Grace of God can give us freshness after Nature has ceased to yield it. And it shall be a better freshness—not the dew of our youth, but the dew of the Spirit of the Lord! If Jesus Christ is preached, age becomes an important help in bearing testimony to His faithfulness and power to bless. I can imagine it to be the duty of the aged minister to retire from the prominent sphere where he has long been the preacher—and I hope in my own case I shall not occupy this pulpit an hour too long! But the man of God can find another pulpit—and when he has found it, I can suppose him often beginning his youth, again, as he tells out the story of the Cross and talks of Jesus—and proclaims the Doctrines of Grace again! He can begin in his country sphere much in the same way as he set out at the first. At any rate, he has always this to fall back upon,” I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” The Holy Spirit will abide with him continually and give him an anointing of freshness.

And so with you, dear Friends. You think, when you have done addressing the class, “Well, I am pretty well spun out. I shall never be able to get another address.” Shall you not? Read that— “I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” And you that go out preaching in the villages and often cry, “I do not know what I shall do for a sermon next Sunday,” think of this and be consoled—“I shall be anointed with fresh oil.” Fall back on that! If you are called to speak to the same people for any length of time, it will make the promise all the more dear to you, as you can plead it before God, “Lord, anoint Your servant with fresh oil.” I pray that all of us in heart, soul, life, utterance and labor may always be kept fresh and may God grant that we do not backslide, for that would kill our freshness and put in the place of its sweet smell the foul odors of sin!

Oh to be holy, sweet and vigorous to the end! The Lord grant that we may make large drafts upon Himself for greater faith, greater love, and greater joy—then shall we have greater freshness! May we also be sustained from within by His blessed Spirit and so may our freshness continue to our dying day.

III. I close with the third point, which is this precious Word of God which gives us HOPE OF ITS RENEWAL. Let us not think that we must grow stale and heavenly things grow old with us, for, first, our God in whom we trust renews the face of the year. He is beginning His work, again, in the fair processes of Nature. The dreary winter has passed away. The time of the singing of birds is coming on and the sweet flowers are peeping out from their graves, enjoying a resurrection of’ glory and beauty.

Now, this is the God whom we serve, and if we have been passing through our wintertime, let us look for our spring. If any of you have been growing cold of late—if any of you have grown stale and mechanical and have fallen into ruts—come, look up! Look up and pray the great Renewer to visit you—

*“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Your quickening powers.”*  
“He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” It will not take the Lord long to restore you. “His word runs very swiftly.” He speaks even to ice and frost and by His word they pass

away. He has but to will it and all the genial days of spring and summer come hastening on and the banner of harvest is waving. “Awake you that sleeps and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” Be hopeful! Be joyful! There are better days for you. Put your trust in God, who renews the face of the earth, and look for His Spirit to revive you.

Moreover, there is an excellent reason why you may expect to have all your freshness coming back—it is because Christ dwells in you! Do you not know it? Christ is formed in you the hope of Glory and, if so, your glory will be fresh about you, for He never grows stale. It is God that said of Him, “You have the dew of Your youth.” Oh, the doctrine of the indwelling of Christ in the Believer—let us never forget it! As long as that is a Truth of God, there is always a hope for us. Then there is the other grand doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in you! If your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, shall He not always be to you a fountain of new life—a spring of fresh delights? Why, it must be so! The Holy Spirit is not exhausted. His power is not lessened in any degree whatever. He can make your face shine, again, and your tongue sing again! He can make your heart leap, again, with unspeakable joy!

Come, you that sit in the dust, begin to rejoice, for God the Spirit is still with you and shall be with you—the Comforter whom Christ has given— never to be taken away! Rejoice in Him and ask Him, now, in His mercy, to restore your soul, and He will do it! Oh, what a blessing it is to get right deep down into God’s Word, for that Word is always new and the source of new thoughts in those who feed upon it! This is the Book of yesterday, today and forever—the Book which, though many of its verses were written thousands of years ago, is as new as though it were only written yesterday! From the mouth of God come the promises, at this moment, full of life and freshness and power! Come to it! It is all yours—every acre of this blessed land of Canaan is yours and will yield you corn and wine and oil!

There is not a star in the great firmament of Scripture but shines for you! There is not a text in all this mighty treasury of God but you may take it and spend it and live upon the produce! Therefore, while the Word of the Lord is so fresh and so full, it cannot be that you shall be stale in thought and conversation. You shall be anointed with fresh oil! God Himself is with you and He is always full! God Himself is with you and He is always living! God Himself is with you and He is always fresh—and He shall refresh your spirit! Why stay away? Come from all that is stale and flat and from all the dead past—and enter into eternal life where flowers forever bloom, fruits forever ripen—and the fresh springs forever flow!

Come and eat the new corn of the land and drink the new wine of the kingdom! And may the Lord make you glad in His House of Prayer for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1365 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TREES IN GOD’S COURTS  
NO. 1365

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright; He is***

***my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” Psalm 92:13-15.***

THESE verses occur at the close of a Psalm for the Sabbath over which there rests a Sabbatic glory of perfect calm, of hallowed peace. Amidst the business and bustle of daily life the great trouble of the Psalmist was the prosperity of the wicked, but it does not trouble him at all when he enters the sanctuary to keep the holy day. He then looks upon the ungodly who prosper in the world as so much flowering grass in their beauty and he beholds them cut down and utterly destroyed. And it is meet that a Psalm for the Sabbath should be calm and peaceful, cloudless and far-seeing. If on any day we see things in their right light and our views extend farther than at other times, surely it should be on the day of sacred rest.

I know a friend who wished to take a house in Newcastle. It stood on an elevated position and the landlord, who wished to have him for a tenant, took him to the attic of the house and said, “What a view there is from this window! Do you know,” he asked, “that on Sundays you can see Durham Cathedral?” “On Sundays!” said my friend, with a look of surprise, “And why not on other days?” “Well,” said the landlord, “on Sundays there is less smoke and so you can see farther.” And, as it is in the natural world, so it should always be in the spiritual—less of the smoke of this world—less of the dust and the care of life and, therefore, a clearer vision of the things which are beyond—things which God reveals to spiritual eyes! Read and sing this Psalm often and may your heart constantly be in that sweet restful state.

David, having here put aside this trouble which he so often brings up in the Psalms—the frequent prosperity of the wicked as they exult in power and spread themselves like a green bay tree, while the righteous are plagued all the day long and chastened every morning—after putting that aside, he dwells upon the delightful condition of the man of God and he describes him as a tree that is planted in the courts of God’s house, growing, flourishing and bearing fruit even in old age. It is of such we are now going to speak and we shall call your attention to the planting of the trees, the promise that they shall flourish, the continued fertility they exhibit and the conclusive proof they show of God’s faithfulness. “Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

I. THE PLANTING. It sounds odd to you to hear of planting a tree in a house and of its flourishing in courts, but you will please remember that an Oriental house is a sort of quadrangle. It is a four-square building with the middle open to the sky and generally there is a small garden in which

a palm tree, or an olive, or some other evergreen tree (for they generally prefer that sort) will be found planted. So what seems strange to us—a tree planted in a house—was not at all strange to David or to anybody else who lived in the city of Jerusalem. And it is a very beautiful figure—this being planted within the four courts of God’s house that we might grow right in the middle of the place where God, with His family, deigns to dwell.

What, then, is it to be planted? Well, we are planted in God’s house in two respects. First, in regeneration, when we are born into the house and, secondly, at our profession of faith, which should be by Baptism, when we are publicly brought into the house and planted in the likeness of Christ’s death by being buried, after His commandment, in the water. We are really planted in the courts of the Lord’s house by the new birth. Then we become the children of God, for “as many as received Him (that is to say, Him who is the Divine Word, the true Light, the Savior), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Every man, the world over, who has been born of the Holy Spirit, is really planted in the Lord’s house. But we become manifestly and visibly so on confessing to the world this inward and spiritual Grace, for the Lord has thus put it, you know, “He that with His heart believes, and with His mouth makes confession, shall be saved,” so that when I come to join God’s people and ask to be admitted to their fellowship—when I come to the Lord’s Table with them and publicly acknowledge myself to be one of the Master’s servants—then I, am in a public manner, planted in the house of the Lord. Well, this being the fact, let us follow the figure a little more closely.

Planting implies, first, that there has been something done for us that that we could not do for ourselves. A tree cannot plant itself! There are self-sown trees, but such are not spoken of in the text. It is, “those that are planted in the house of the Lord.” And you know it is necessary that there should be a work of Grace upon our souls, which shall come, not from ourselves, but distinctly from God, for, “every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up.” It cannot plant itself and, if it could, it must be rooted up, because it would not be planted by the heavenly Father. There must be worked upon us, in order to our being truly in the courts of the Lord’s house, a work of

 Grace infinitely beyond the power of the will or all the power that dwells in human nature.

We must, in fact, be new-created. We must be born again! We must have as great a work worked upon us as was worked upon the body of Christ when He was raised from the dead! The eternal power and Godhead of the Divine Spirit must put forth the fullness of His strength to raise you up from your death in sin, or, otherwise you will be like sear branches and cast off pieces of wood—and you will never be as trees planted, made to live and to grow in the courts of the Lord’s house. There must be something done for us if we are planted. That implies, too, that there must be a great change in our position, for a tree that is planted has been growing somewhere else.

It has to reach a certain height in the nurseryman’s garden, if we are speaking of England, and then it is planted where it is meant to be permanently fixed. So must it have been in the East. The tree grew somewhere else. After a time it was dug up, its roots were loosened and it was taken away from the place where it had been accustomed to stand. Many a tender rootlet was made to bleed and it was then carried and put in another place altogether and, from being outside the court, it came to be inside the court of the house of the Lord. So, Brothers and Sisters, if we are to answer the condition described in the text, we must have been dug up and transplanted. This is to have undergone a great and wonderful change.

Are we conscious of it? Do we know ourselves to be new creatures in Christ Jesus? If you are what you always were, you are what I pray you may not always be! But if you are new, changed, transformed, or, to come back to the text, transplanted, then I trust you may continue to thrive according to the promise, “They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” Ah me, that transplanting business is often very painful and, while it is being undergone, we almost think that we are going to be destroyed! What anxiety it causes, for how is the plant to know why it is being taken up by the roots?

Perhaps it fancies—or rather, if it had any intellect it would fancy that it was taken up to be destroyed—just as when the Law put a big spade down to our roots and began to loosen all our soil about us, we thought, “Now we are going to be cut down.” But we were not—we were going to be transplanted from the field of Nature into the garden of Grace! Blessed be God, we know what this means! Planting means not only that something has been done for us that we could not do for ourselves and that a great change has taken place in our position, but it implies that there is life in us!

I suppose that if we speak of planting a post or planting a pillar, we hardly use correct language. We plant a thing that has life in it and we do not consider that a thing has been planted unless it is a living thing. Most certainly the promise of the text could not be fulfilled to any but a living tree, for it is said—“They that are planted shall flourish and they shall bring forth fruit.” God does not intend to have dead stumps standing in His court—

*“That little garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground,  
That little spot enclosed by Grace  
Out of the world’s wild wilderness,”*

is not intended to be occupied by dead trees! If there is such in it He will come and say, “Cut it down! Why does it cumber the ground?” It is a living tree that He desires to have there.

Beloved, are you conscious of an inner life? Does there beat within you another pulse—the pulse of strong desire and love to God—besides that which betokens natural life? Is there within you the heaving of another breath than that which keeps body and soul together? Is there the breath of prayer that keeps the soul and God together and so keeps the man in

spiritual life? Are you quickened? Have you had breathed into your nostrils the breath of the Life of God? Is there within you the incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever? God’s people are a living people and if we do not know the life of God we do not know God at all! There must be a life in us. And then, to complete the figure, it seems to me that the fact of our being planted implies that we, ourselves, have taken hold of the soil where we have been placed. A tree that is rightly planted, so as to flourish, begins to send out its roots—to drink in moisture—to select from the earth around it those portions which are fit food for vegetable life.

Now, Beloved, are you so incorporated with the Church of God that you have got a grip of the fellowship of the saints, that you have effectually laid hold of the citizenship of our Lord’s faithful disciples? Are you seeking for vital Truths of God to sustain your soul’s vitality? Do you, in the ordinances, send out the rootlets of your desire to seek after what God has prepared for you? Is there flowing in you a living sap, which sap is being fed by what you draw in from the soil in which God has placed you? Surely you know what this means! Sundays are often feeding times to you and your visits to the Lord in prayer are building-up times to your spirit!

And when you search the Word of God in private and when the Holy Spirit communes with you in your quiet retirement—yes, and when, even in the midst of business, your soul breathes her swift utterances up to Heaven—then are the roots of your soul taking hold of Christ and drawing out of Him the vital element which you need! You are of the right kind if this is the case—and you shall flourish in the courts of our God! You see, then, the figure, and what is meant by this planting in the house of the Lord.

II. Now, secondly, LET US ENDEAVOR TO GRASP THE PROMISE. “Those that are planted shall flourish.” “Flourish” they well may. Let us be sure of their welfare. They shall flourish because God has said that they shall! His promises are sure to be fulfilled. If He plants a tree, He will cause it to flourish. There seems to be very much against the Christian. He is exposed to many perils when he is first planted. Indeed, in the early childhood of Christian life, we undergo a world of trial. Such was our weakness and such our exposure to the bleak atmosphere of this present evil world—the chances were all against us.

But there is no chance with God! What He plants is sure to take root. If He says it shall flourish, flourish it will! Satan may seek to tear it up. The foxes may try to spoil the vines. There may be chilling winds. There may be long droughts. The sun may seek to smite it by day and the moon by night, but God has promised that it shall flourish and flourish it must! Therefore I invite you, young Christians, to be very hopeful. See to it that you are rightly planted and then you may depend upon it that you will really flourish! God, who has been pleased to give you Divine Grace, will bestow on you more Grace and then more Grace—Grace upon Grace— Grace for every crisis and every emergency!

As your needs arise, those needs shall be supplied. Just as you require spiritual health, spiritual health shall be vouchsafed to you if you seek it at His hands, knowing that it is at His disposal. You shall not be a halfstarved Christian—a sort of living skeleton of a Believer, but you shall flourish! You shall be peaceful, happy, strong, useful. Set your heart upon this and ask the Lord to make you thrive, bloom and bear fruit. Your leaf shall not wither and He will cause you to prosper if you are planted in the courts of the Lord.

Some of you, perhaps, are Christian men who have received the Word with gladness and believed to the saving of your souls and, so far, you appear to be in the courts of God’s house. But you have never joined the Church, or made a profession of your faith, which, though it may be very sincere, is not very apparent! As, however, you have not gone in for the whole of the planting, you cannot reasonably expect to realize the whole of the flourishing! I like to know that I have given myself wholly up to the Lord according to His commands—not having merely embraced one part of the Gospel, but the whole of it. When one has sought to obey it in its entirety, then he may come and expect to have the promise in its entireness, too. If you are altogether Christians, planted in His house—not merely in His garden, but in His house—then you shall flourish, for you have the promise that you shall!

And flourish you well may, because of the goodness of the soil. They are quite sure to have good soil in the little garden enclosed by the house. It may be rocky outside, but when a man has built the four walls of his house in the East, he generally takes all the soil that is in the middle away. It may be very bad and poor, but then he has brought in baskets of the richest soil that he can possibly get, for he must have a good tree in the middle of his house. It would not do every moment of the day to look out, or rather to look in and to see a little scrubby tree, half alive. No, he procures the best soil he can get and those that are planted in the house of the Lord are planted in the best soil possible!

They are planted where the means of Grace abound! They are planted where Christians help one another with mutual fellowship. They are planted where the ordinances of the Gospel are freely enjoyed by all who dwell there. They are planted where the Holy Spirit has promised to abide. They are planted where the Word of God does not return void. They are planted where the eyes and the heart of Christ perpetually rest. They are planted in His Church—the Church that He has redeemed with His most precious blood! The soil is good and they ought to flourish—and they shall.

And then they are planted in a sheltered position. You know that trees, even if they have good soil, are sometimes a great deal kept back by having a cold northerly aspect. They may be very much bitten by the frost. But a tree that is planted right in the middle of the forecourt, surrounded by the walls, is sheltered. There is the natural warmth of the house round about it and it is sheltered from that which other trees out in the vineyard, or out in the garden, may have to endure. Oh, how sheltered some of us have been from our first profession of faith! I know that I can speak to some here who began Christian life in a class in the Sunday school where a loving teacher looked after their spiritual interests.

There are others of you that began your Christian life in the midst of a warm-hearted, earnest Church. You were no sooner seen as a member than two or three friends took hold of you and they did all they could to encourage you, guide you and sympathize with you. Whenever they may have observed a little lukewarmness or backsliding in your manner, they have looked after you as a mother anxious for her child—so tenderly have you been nursed by those who watched for your souls! And you surely cannot forget how, on Sundays, the Word of God has been a wonderful shelter to you! When your feet had almost slipped, there has been the very Word to hold you up.

When you felt dispirited there has been a promise to encourage you. When you have been ready to turn back, there has been an exhortation that has stimulated you once more to go forward—and so you have lived inside four walls. The cold could not get at you. You scarcely had enough of the cold of the world to do you any injury! The warm sun of righteousness was reflected upon you—not only did it come at once upon you by Divine favor—but it was reflected upon you with grateful sympathy by the walls of the house of the Lord in which you had been planted. You know it has been so! Is it any wonder, then, that you flourish?

There is a little wonder, sometimes, that you do not flourish more and that you do not bring forth more fruit, for what more could God do than He has done for some of you who have been planted in the house of the Lord? Are you not like a vineyard on a very fruitful hill which He has hedged about and walled? And does it not seem as if He has watered you every morning, and, lest any should hurt you, has kept you night and day? How sour the grapes and how few the clusters fit for the Great Vinedresser to gather, no one knows better than yourselves. Yet you ought to flourish, because you are planted in good soil and because you are placed in a sheltered position.

Still we might assign a better reason why you should flourish. It is because you are so near the Farmer. “My Father is the Farmer,” says Christ. They that are planted in the house of the Lord are planted in the Farmer’s house. I think I hear someone say, “I do not wonder that such a vine flourishes, because, you see, the Great Vinedresser, who understands all about it, has it on the wall of His own house. He sees it every morning and, of course He pays very special attention to it.” Little do you and I know, Beloved, what special attention God has paid to us personally and individually!

Oh, there are some of us upon whom the Lord has long looked with a tender but jealous eye. If He has seen a little wrong about us, He has grieved at it and felt, “I must put it away.” When He has seen us getting a little cold, He has begun at once to awaken us, for He has loved us too well to leave us exposed to even a little spiritual sickness. He has said sometimes, “There is My servant and he will get proud of his service, or of his success—I must bring him down.” High looks and haughty thoughts are an abomination in His sight!

Another time He has said, “Such-and-Such is increasing in wealth. He will get worldly-minded. I must take away some of his worldly goods that he may take more account of his treasures laid up in Heaven and set his heart more on Me.” The Lord your God is a jealous God! Where there is love, there is oftentimes a sensitiveness which stirs up jealousy. The greatness of God’s love makes Him very zealous for us and very jealous of us. If He sees those whom He very much loves with the slightest evil thing about them, He is quick to observe it and prompt to purge it away. You know that you do not like to see a spot on your dear child’s face—you will have it washed off as soon as possible. So will the Lord cleanse His people, both on the outside and within!

The care and the trouble He has had with us, as I have already said, none of us can tell. We ought to bring forth fruit to the profit of the Farmer, to the glory of God. Branches that bring forth fruit He purges. Those that bring forth very little fruit He lets very much alone. If there is a man that brings forth much fruit, that man will have much trial because it will profit the Vinedresser to prune him. Some branches will not pay for it. They will never do more than they are doing and so there they are and thus they are left to prove their feebleness. But those that will profit for pruning will be pruned again and again! And truly, when the man of God is in his right mind, he will bless the Lord for the honor He puts upon him when He afflicts him with the view of making him still more useful.

This is evermore our Lord’s design. Does He not say that they shall never perish whom He protects and provides for, holding them in His hands? But, as they cannot flourish if they run to wood, He will be quite sure to use His knife to take off this new shoot and that new shoot because it is not fruit-bearing wood. And so He takes it away and He leaves the vine in such a condition that it will bring forth good fruit in due time. They shall flourish and well they may, when they are so near to the Great Farmer’s hand!

Now, if any of you are not flourishing, though you are planted in the house of the Lord, I am sure it is not through any fault on God’s part. Let such ask Him, and ask themselves, the reason why and go to Him in prayer and say—“Good Lord, I am planted in Your house. Make me to flourish according to Your Word.”

III. Well, now, as to THE CONTINUANCE OF THIS FLOURISHING, our third head is full of consolation. “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.” There are some that begin with a spurt and it is soon over. And there are some trees that promise exceedingly well for fruit, but the blossoms do not knit and, therefore, they fail to yield fruit in due season. But those whom God plants and whom He makes to flourish, bring forth fruit and continue to bring it forth, still, in old age! During all their youth and all their manhood they are fruitful and then they bring forth fruit when their years decline and their days are numbered!

When others are in the sear and yellow leaf, their fruits are ripe and mellow. When others are decaying, they are ripening. They are growing sweeter, better, holier when others are not growing at all. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age—that time when one does not expect much fruit bearing—when the strength fails and when the capacity for projecting seems to have gone and the power for carrying out what is projected

has become very little. “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” This is not merely a cheering promise, but it is a very gratifying fact that God’s people still bring forth fruit in old age! Some of them produce very luscious fruit.

Yes, we look for the best fruit in the oldest saints. What fruit, then, you will ask, do they bring forth? Well, there is the fruit of testimony. I distinctly remember hearing a blind old minister talk of the loving kindness of the Lord when I was 16 or 17—and the encouragement that he gave me has never departed from me. A young man could not have done that because he had not attained so much experience. But the weight of years and even of infirmities, made that venerable blind man’s testimony very, very weighty to my soul. “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” Blessed be His name, I can tell of the goodness of the Lord to me these 25 years or more since I have known Him! But think of a man who can speak of 50 years—and there are some children of God who can do so!

There is a member of this Church who has been a member of it for 70 years and she can tell you how good the Lord has been to her! And the fruit is riper, you know. There is a cumulative force of evidence, because if a thing has been true 50 years and a person has tried it in all sorts and shapes and ways and modes and conditions and circumstances—50 years—well, who is to contradict that? It must be so and you feel the testimony is a blessed fruit of old age. Saints bring forth fruit in the way of savor when they grow old. Many young ministers can rattle out some of the Truths of the Gospel very readily, but if you want to taste the sweetness, to feel the unction, to enjoy the savor—you must hear one that has had long and deep experience. It must be so!

There is an inimitable mellowness about the Christian who has grown old in his Master’s service. If you want to hear about the sea, talk to an “old salt.” If you want to hear about war, talk to an old soldier that has been in battle and smelt gunpowder—and knows what it is to have lost a leg. He is the man to tell you! And so, if you want to know about the real deeps, the truth, the vitality, the power of religion—you must not go to boys—you must go to those who bring forth fruit in old age because they can speak out of the fullness of their soul! We have had some in this Church—there are such now and there are some in Heaven—who, every time we used to hear them speak, let drop pearls and diamonds while they talked about what the Lord had done for them!

Dear old Mr. Dransfield—how many a time he electrified us when he used to stand on that platform and talk about the blessedness of God and the sweetness of religion to his soul! You used to think a great deal more of it because he was so old. I am sure you did! It was good in itself, but still there was the age of the man at the back of it. So in that case the age gave a power to the experience which he told us. The aged Christian ought to have and I hope he often has, the fruit of patience. After having suffered so long and enjoyed the mercies of God so long, he ought to learn to be patient. I once heard a good Christian man say that he was confessing a fault.

He said, “I am afraid that the fruit of my old age is peevishness.” “No,” I said, “that is not a fruit of your old age—it is a fruit of your old nature.” But the fruit of old age, where there is Grace in old age, should be patience. And oh, what fruit some of God’s servants show by way of patience in poverty, in sickness, in infirmities! There used to sit here an aged woman who could not hear anything I said, but she always came because she thought it was setting a good example to the young people at home to attend the house of God. Whenever I used to speak with her, there was such a charm about her conversation because, though she was much tried, she never uttered a complaint. She could only bless the name of the Lord for everything!

You remember Dr. Hamilton’s story of poor old Betty who could not do anything but lie in bed and cough? She said, “Well, bless the Lord, whatever the Lord has told me to do I have tried to do it. And when He said, ‘Betty, bring up your family,’ I tried to bring them up in the fear of God. When He said, ‘Betty, go to the house of God and sing My praises,’ I was delighted to do it. And when He said, ‘Betty, go upstairs and lie in bed and cough,’ well I did that, too, and still do it,” she said, “and bless the name of the Lord for letting me do it so long as there is anything to be done for Him.” Now, the promise is that if we are planted as I have described, we shall be enabled to bring forth fruit in old age. Anything that we do with a sincere desire to glorify God in it and anything that we bear with patience and quietness according to the Divine will is sweet and gracious fruit. We can, by God’s Grace, bring forth that fruit in our old age.

One of the most delicious fruits that Christians produce in their old age is calm, quiet confidence in God. John Bunyan has described this in his, “Pilgrim’s Progress,” in the beautiful picture of the land, Beulah. I shall not at all object to have a gray head and eyes like lamps whose wasting oil is spent, weak shoulders and tottering knees if I may get to Beulah! You know that he describes it as a land that was just on the verge of the river and so near to the Celestial Country that the shining ones did often cross the river. And there was a pervading smell of sweet spices all over the land because it lay so near to the City of the Blessed that when the wind blew that way it wafted the spices across! And they could, in quiet places of the land, often hear the songs of the shining ones who wandered there.

The inhabitants were at perfect rest. The land was called Beulah, for God’s delight was in her. They that dwelt in her were called Heph-Zibah, for they were married unto the Lord and they were sitting there, many of them, close by the brink of the river, waiting till a message should come from the King, for the King’s messengers, every now and then, came into the country and said, “The pitcher is broken at the cistern. Rise up, my Love, and come away.” And so, one by one, the Beulahites crossed that river! On bright sunshiny mornings they were known to cross it singing, “O Grave, where is your victory?”

Well, it is that patient abiding, that quiet waiting, that holy confidence, that Divine anticipation, that sweet expectation of the coming Glory that is one of the fruits which Believers bring forth in old age. And whenever we see it, we prize those golden apples and long for the time when we may bear them, too. But now notice that the text does not speak of old age

merely bringing forth fruit, but it says—“They shall be fat and flourishing,” which means that Christians, in their advanced years, shall have a fullness of savor and life in them. I have known some Christians, both old and young, that have been very dry sticks—certainly not fat and flourishing! They had very little savor and very little unction, though they had very sharp teeth to bite the young people with. They were very critical, very ready to look harshly at them and ask them hard questions.

And, if the youngster could not spell the biggest word in the whole Confession of Faith, they have said, “Ah, the young people nowadays are not like what they used to be in my time.” We have known some of that sort! But when they are planted in the house of God and God makes them to flourish, they are full of the juice of love! They are full of Christian kindness and gentleness! They are full of life! They are full of real vigor—not the vigor of the flesh, but the vigor of the Spirit—and they love the Lord and delight in Him. They greatly delight to help the young people and to encourage them in the ways of the Lord. Oh, I like to see an old man thus fat and flourishing!

And it is added, in addition to their being fat, that they shall be flourishing. It means that the aged Believer shall have a special verdure. This flourishing means his profession—and how delightful is the profession of Christianity in advanced age! I do not mean that some people get exceedingly attached to the pastor whom they have heard for many, many years. One old woman used to say that she liked to hear the old minister better than anybody else. “Well, but,” they said, “He is getting very feeble.” “Oh,” she said, “but then I remember what he used to be and I would sooner see him shake his head than I would hear anybody else preach.”

And I have no doubt that, though that grows to be an infirmity and folly, there is something praiseworthy in it because you remember the times and seasons when the Lord refreshed your soul by him and there is a moral glory about a man as you look at him who has been, say, for 50 years, living and laboring as a public professing Christian—without a stain upon his reputation—not a spot on his character! Why, the young people say, “Bless God! If He has kept him, why should He not keep me? And if the Lord has sustained him under many trials, why should He not sustain me?” It is not what the man says—it is the man that says it that gives force to all he says. It is what you know is behind the voice. It is the experience of the Lord’s goodness. It is the long-continued honorable conduct which God has enabled him to maintain and show to others, by the abounding Grace that was within him, which preaches in accents louder than the finest voice can articulate!

Now, I pray that every young man here—and I am glad to see so many young men—will seek to be, one day, among the old men whose profession shall be the very strength of the Church because of this consistency! I will not say to my elder Brothers and Sisters—because the Lord will say it to them—that they ought to remember what manner of people they ought to be, seeing that God has been so gracious to them these many years.

IV. I close with my fourth point, which is THE MANIFESTATION THAT AFFORDS CONCLUSIVE PROOF OF THE DIVINE FAITHFULNESS. “To show that the Lord is upright.” These good folks are to bring forth fruit and to be fat and flourishing, on purpose, to manifest before the eyes of all men, “That the Lord is upright. He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” “That the Lord is upright.” Well, how does the fruit-bearing of an aged Christian show that? Why, it shows that God has kept His promise! He has promised that He will never leave them nor forsake them.

There you see it—He has promised that when they are weak they shall be strong! There you see it—He has promised that if they seek Him they shall not lack any good thing. There you see it. He has promised them, “Your bread shall be given you. Your water shall be sure.” Hear what they have to say and you will see it! He has said, “Even to hoar hairs I am He. I have made and I will bear, and I will carry you as in the days of old.” There you have it. Ask them! There you see it. We put, “Q. E. D.,” at the end of a proposition when it is proved. So you may put that down at the end of the problem of life. God is good to His people! The old man stands up and says, “Truly God is good to Israel. If you could hear my story, young man, you would see it before your eyes and it would show that the Lord is upright.”

Nor is it only that He keeps His promises, but the Lord is kind and generous towards His servants. I always think it a shameful, heartless thing to turn adrift, when He gets old, a man who has been in your service from His youth. It is one of the things that have become more common in present than in former times, to turn out old servants. Since you have had the pith of their life—the marrow out of their bones—keep a roof over their heads! Grant them a pension, or at least a pittance! Supply them with a bit of bread and cheese till they die. I think it is only right that an old servant, a faithful servant, should be so treated.

You know how David puts it. “O God, You have taught me from my youth, and up to now have I declared Your wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.” It is not likely that He would, is it? Such a God as He, turn His old servants out? You remember the Amalekite who had a master that was an Egyptian and the master left him to perish and David found him? Ah, well, that is how the Egyptian masters do, but that is not how our Master does! You will not leave or desert me when my age and my infirmities multiply upon me! When these eyes grow dim You will look upon me. When another shall guard me and lead me where I would not, You, still, will be my Friend and Helper, and lay Your finger on my eyelids as I close them in the hour of death. It is a faithful God we serve, and He keeps His people alive in their old age that they may show that He is a faithful and upright God.

Now, David added at the end, “He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” I want every one of my elderly friends to add his, Amen, to this sentence and to set his seal that God is true! Come forward as witnesses, attest the deed while it is being executed and put your names to the record and say, “I bear witness to that.” At least I want you in the silence of your hearts to come and say, “Yes, I can bear witness.” David

says, “He is my rock.” My aged Brothers and Sisters, you can say, “God is the Rock on which my hope is founded—my Foundation—and He has never failed me. The Rock will never shake, never move, never give way. He is the Rock of my defense—the ‘Rock of Ages cleft for me.’ I have hidden myself in Him and I have been safe. He is the Rock of my abiding. I have dwelt in Him and lived in Him and I have found Him my castle and my high tower. He is a Rock for immutability.”

Can you say that, Brothers and Sisters? He has never changed—never! He has been “without variableness or shadow of turning.” Every good and perfect gift have I received from Him. Bear witness to it! This is what is needed in this age—that you should bear witness that God is a Rock— firm, strong, faithful, immutable—the defense of His people! And then “there is no unrighteousness in Him.” I would have you bear witness to that. You have had some sharp troubles. Have you ever had more than you ought to have? You have had many losses. Have you really lost anything in being a Christian? You have been brought very low. Have you ever been altogether left and deserted? You have gone through fire and through water, but has the fire consumed you? Has the water drowned you?

If you have anything to say against God, you old servants of His, let us hear it! No, but the older God’s people get, the more they praise Him! And one reason why I am sure that God must be a good God is that I always find that all His servants want to get their children into the same house, into the same family! A man is not badly treated by his master when he says, “My ambition is to have my boy follow me.” Oh, I can speak well of my Lord and Master in all that He has ever given me to do, but it is the joy of my soul to think that my sons should follow me in the love of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel!

We who are younger men, but yet who have had a good deal of tossing to and fro, can say, “He is my Lord and there is no unrighteousness in Him. No, not a flaw in Him—not one unkindness, not one unfaithfulness, not one forgetfulness, not one angry word, not one thing but what has been full of love.” He has said, “I have sworn that I would not be angry with you, or rebuke you,” and He has kept His promise! And up to this hour we cannot discover speck, spot, or flaw in all the transactions of His Providence. Though sometimes they have been mysterious, they have always been right!

Blessed be His name forever and ever! Oh, who would not be planted in the courts of such a God as this to be kept even to old age and to be blessed with such unspeakable blessings world without end? God grant you all to be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified! Amen.

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MORNING AND EVENING SONGS  
NO. 1138

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.”  
Psalm 92:2.**

IT is a notion of the Rabbis that this Psalm was sung by Adam in Paradise. There are no reasons why we should believe it was so and there are a great many why we should be sure it was not. It is not possible that Adam could have sung concerning brutish men and fools, and the wicked springing as grass, while as yet he was the only man, and himself unfallen. Still, at least the first part of the Psalm might have fallen as suitably from the lips of Adam as from our tongues, and if Milton could put into Adam’s mouth the language—

*“These are Your glorious works,  
Parent of good, Almighty, shine this universal frame. Thus wondrous fair, Yourself how wondrous then!”*

He might with equal fitness have made him say, “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Your name, O Most High: to show forth Your loving kindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night; for You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work: I will triumph in the works of Your hands.”

The Jews have, for a long while, used this Psalm in the synagogue worship on their Sabbath and very suitable it is for our Sunday—not so much in appearance, for there is little or no allusion to any Sabbatic rest in it— but because on that day, above all others, our thoughts should be lifted up from all earthly things to God Himself. The Psalm tunes the mind to adoration and so prepares it for Sunday worship. It supplies us with a noble subject for meditation—the Lord, the Lord alone, lifting us up even above His works into a contemplation of Himself and His mercies toward us. Oh, that always on Sunday, when we come together, we might assemble in the spirit of praise, feeling that it is good to give thanks unto the name of the Most High—and would God that always when we were assembled we could say, “You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work: I will triumph in the works of Your hands.”

There is no doubt that in this second verse there is an allusion to the offering of the morning and the evening lambs, for, in addition to the great Paschal celebration, once a year, and the other feasts and fasts, each of which brought Christ prominently before the mind of those Jews who were instructed by the Spirit of God, a lamb was offered every morning and every evening, as if to remind them that they needed daily cleansing for daily sin. For then there was always a remembrance of sin, seeing that the one great Sacrifice which puts away sin forever had not yet been offered, though now, in these, our days, we need no morning or evening lamb. The very idea of a repetition or a rehearsal of the Sacrifice of Christ is, to us, most horribly profane and blasphemous, yet we should remember continually the one Sacrifice and never wake in the morning without beholding “the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world,” nor fall to sleep at night without turning our eyes anew to Him who, on the bloody tree, was made sin for us.

Our text, however, is meant to speak to us concerning praise. Praise should be the continual exercise of Believers. It is the joyful work of Heaven—it should be the continual joy of earth. And we are taught by the text, I think, that while praise should be given only to the One who is in Heaven, and we should adore perpetually our Triune God, yet there should be variety in our unity. We bless the Lord and the Lord alone. We have no music but for Him, but we do not always praise Him after the same fashion. As there were different instruments of music—the tenstringed instrument or decachord, the psaltery, the harp—so, too, there are different subjects—a subject for the morning and a subject for the evening—loving kindness to be shown forth at one time and faithfulness to be sung at another.

I wish that men studied more the praise they profess to present unto God. I sometimes find, even in our own public song, simple as it is, that there evidently is a lack of thought among us—for time is not maintained with the precision which would grow out of thoughtfulness. There is a tendency to sing more slowly, as if devotion were wearying, if not wearisome. And too frequently I fear the singing gets to be mechanical, as if the tune mastered you and you did not govern the tune by making those inflections and modulations of voice which the sense would suggest if you sang with all your hearts and with all your understandings.

The very posture of some people indicates that they are going through the hymn, but the hymn is not going through their hearts, nor ascending to God on the wings of soaring gratitude. I have also noticed with sad reflections the way in which, if there happens to be a chorus at the close—a “Hallelujah,” or “Praise God”—some will drop into their seats as if they had not thought enough to remember that it was coming, and then, with a jerk, all in confusion, they stand up again, being so asleep in heart that anything out of the common is too much for them. Far am I from caring for postures or tones, but when they indicate lack of heart, I do care, and so should you. Remember well that there is no more of music to God’s ear in any service than there is of heart-love and holy devotion. You may make floods of music with your organ if you like, or you may make equally good music—and some of us think better—with human voices, but it is not music to God, either of instrument or of voice, unless the heart is there. And the heart is not fully there—the man, the whole man, is not fully there—unless the soul glows with the praise.

In our private praise, also, we ought to think more of what we are doing and concentrate our entire energies for the sacred exercise. Ought we not to sit down, before we pray, and ask our understanding, “What am I going to pray for? I bow my knee at my bedside to pray—ought I not to pause and consider the things I ought to ask for? What do I need, and what are the promises which I should plead? And why is it that I may expect that God should grant me what I want?” We would pray better if we occupied more time in consideration. And so when we come to praise we ought not to rush upon it, helter skelter, but engage in it with prepared hearts.

I notice that when musicians are about to discourse sweet music there is a tuning-up. There is a preparation and there are rehearsals which they perform before they go through their music in public. So our soul ought to rehearse the subject for which it is about to bless God and we ought to come before the Lord, both in public and in private, with subjects of praise which our thought has considered, not offering unto the Lord that which has cost us nothing, but with a warm heart pouring out before His Throne adoration grounded upon subjects of thanksgiving appropriate to the occasion.

So it seems the Psalmist would have us do—“To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.” It is not mere praise, but varied praise, praise with distinct subjects at appointed seasons. Upon this we are about to speak for a little while. And we shall speak first—here is a subject for morning worship. Secondly, here is another for evening devotion. And this last, before we close our discourse, we shall try to practice.

I. First, then, notice MORNING WORSHIP—“To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning.” “In the morning.” There cannot be a more suitable time for praising God than in the morning! Everything around is congenial to it. Even in this great wilderness of brick the gleams of sunlight in these summer mornings seem like songs, songs without words—or rather music without sounds. And out in the country where every blade of grass twinkles with its own drop of dew, and all the trees glisten as if they were lit up with sapphire by the rising dawn—and when a thousand birds awake to praise their Maker, making harmonious concerts, all with all their hearts casting their entire energies into the service of holy song—it seems most fit that the key of the morning should be in the hand of praise—and that when the daylight lifts its eyelids it should look out upon grateful hearts.

We ourselves have newly risen from our beds and if we are in a right state of mind we are thankful for the night’s sleep—

*“The evening rests our wearied head,  
And angels guard the room.  
We wake, and we admire the bed  
That was not made our tomb.”*

Every morning is a sort of resurrection. At night we lay us down to sleep, stripped of our garments, as our souls are of their bodies when we come to die. But the morning wakes us and if it is a Sunday morning we do not put on our work-day clothes, but find our Sunday dress ready to hand. Even thus shall we be satisfied when we wake up in our Master’s likeness, no more to put on the soiled raiment of earth, but to find it transformed into a Sunday robe in which we shall be beautiful and fair, even as Jesus our Lord, Himself!

Now, as every morning brings to us, in fact, a resurrection from what might have been our tomb, and delivers us from the image of death which through the night we wore, it ought to be saluted with thanksgiving. As the great Resurrection morning will be awakened with the sound of the

trumpet’s far-sounding music, so let every morning, as though it were a resurrection to us, awaken us with hymns of joy!—  
*“All praise to You who safe have kept,  
And have refreshed me while I slept!  
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,  
I may of endless life partake.”*  
“To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning.” We are full of vigor then! We shall be tired before night comes round—perhaps in the heat of the day we shall be exhausted. Let us take care, while we are fresh, to give the cream of the morning to God. Our poet says—  
*“The flower, when offered in the bud,  
Is no mean sacrifice.”*  
Let us give the Lord the bud of the day, its virgin beauty, its unsullied purity.  
Say what you will about the evening, and there are many points about it which make it an admirable season for devotion, yet the morning is the choice time. Is it not a queenly hour? See how it is adorned with diamonds more pure than those which flash in the crowns of eastern potentates! The old proverb declares that they who would be rich must rise early. Surely those who would be rich towards God must do so! No dews fall in the middle of the day and it is hard to keep up the dew and freshness of one’s spirit in the worry, care and turmoil of midday. But in the morning the dew should fall upon our fleece till it is filled and it is well to wring it out before the Lord, and give Him our morning’s vigor, our morning’s freshness and unction!  
You will see, I think, without my enlarging, that there is a fitness in the morning for praising God. But I shall not merely confine the text to the morning of each day. The same fitness appertains to the morning of all our days. Our youth, our first hours of the day of life, ought to be spent in showing forth the loving kindness of God. Dear young Friends, you may rest assured that nothing can happen to you so blessed as to be converted while you are young! I bless God for my having known Him when I was 15 years of age, but I have often felt like that Irishman who said that he was converted at 20 and he wished it had been 21 years before. I have often felt the same desire.  
Oh, if it could have been so, that the very first breath one drew had been consecrated to God, that it had been possible for the first rational thought to be one of devotion—that the first act of judgment had been exercised upon Divine Truth and the first pulsing affection had been towards the Redeemer who loved us and gave Himself for us! What blessed reflections would fill the space now occupied with penitent regrets! The first part of a Christian life has charms peculiar to itself. In some respects—  
*“That age is best which is the first,  
For then the blood is warmer.”*  
I know the after part is riper, it is more mellow. There is a sweetness about autumn fruit, but the basket of early fruit—the first ripe fruit—this is what God desires! And blessed are they who, in the morning, show forth the loving kindness of God!  
Or the words may be explained mystically to signify those periods of life which are bright like the morning to us. We have our ups and downs, our ebbs and flows, our mornings and our nights. Now, it is the duty and the privilege, of our bright days, for us to show forth God’s loving kindness in them. It may be some of you have had so rough a life that you consider your nights to be more numerous than your days. Others of us could not, even in common honesty, subscribe to such a belief. No, blessed be God, our mornings have been very numerous. Our days of joy and rejoicing, after all, have been abundant—infinitely more abundant than we might have expected they could be, dwelling as we do in the land of sorrows. Oh, when the joy days come, let us always consecrate them by showing forth God’s loving kindness!  
Do not as some do, who, if they are prospering, make a point of not admitting to it. If they make money, for instance—well, they are “doing pretty well.” “Pretty well,” do they call it? Time was, when, if they had done half so well, they would have been ready to jump for joy! How often the farmer, when his crop could not be any larger, and when the field is loaded with it, will say, “Well, it is a very fair crop.” Is that all? Oh, what robbery of God! This talk is far too common on all sides and ought to be most solemnly rebuked! When we have been enjoying a long stretch of joy and peace, instead of saying that it is so, we speak as if—well, well, God has dealt very well with us upon the whole, but at the same time He has done for us nothing very remarkable.  
I saw a tombstone the other day which pleased me. I do not know that I ever saw an epitaph of that kind before. I think it was for a person of the age of 80, and it said of her, “who after a happy and grateful enjoyment of life, died,” and so on. Now, that is what we ought to say, but we talk as if, really, we were to be pitied for living—as if we were little better off than toads under a hallow, or snails in a tub of salt! We whine as if our lives were martyrdoms and every breath a woe. But it is not so! Such conduct slanders the good Lord! Blessed be the Lord for creating us. Our life has mercies, yes, innumerable mercies. And, notwithstanding the sorrows and the troubles of it, there are joys and benedictions past all count. There are mornings in which it becomes us to show forth the loving kindness of the Lord.  
See, then, the season, the morning of each day, the morning of our days and the morning of our brightness and prosperity. The Psalmist suggests that the best topic for praise on such occasions is loving kindness. And truly I confess that this is a theme which might suit nights as well as days, though doubtless he saw an appropriateness in allotting this topic to the morning. Verily it might suffice for all the day long! Was there ever such a word in any language as that word loving kindness? I have sometimes heard Frenchmen talking about their language and I have no doubt it is a very beautiful tongue. And Germans glorify the speech of the Fatherland and I have heard our Welsh friends extolling their unpronounceable language and crying it up as the very tongue that was spoken in Paradise! Very likely, indeed!  
But I venture to say that no language beneath the sky has a word in it that is richer than this—loving kindness. It is a duplicate deliciousness. There are, within it, linked sweetnesses long drawn out. Loving kindness. It is a kind of word with which to cast spells which should charm away all fears! It was said of Mr. Whitefield that he could have moved an audience to tears by saying the word, “Mesopotamia.” I think he could have done it better with the word, “loving kindness.” Put it under your tongue, now. Let it lie there. LOVING KINDNESS. Kindness. Does that mean kinned-ness? Some say that it is the root-sense of the word—kinned-ness, such feeling as we have to our own kin, for blood is always thicker than water and we act towards those who are our kindred as we cannot readily do towards strangers.  
Now, God has made us of His kin. In His own dear Son He has taken us into His family. We are children of God—“heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus.” And there is a kinned-ness from God to us through our great Kinsman, Jesus Christ. But then the word is only half understood when you get to that, for it is loving-kindness. For a surgeon to set a man’s limb when it is out of joint or broken is kindness, although he may do it somewhat roughly and in an off-hand manner. But if he does it very tenderly, covering the lion’s heart with the lady’s hand—then he shows loving kindness. A man is picked up on the battlefield and put into an ambulance and carried to the hospital. That is kindness. But oh, if that poor soldier’s mother could come into the hospital and see her boy suffering, she would show him loving-kindness, which is something far more! A child run over in the street outside yonder, and taken to the hospital, would be cared for, I have no doubt, with the greatest kindness. But, after all, send for its mother, for she will give it loving kindness! And so the Lord deals with us. He gives us what we need in a fatherly manner. He does to us what we need in the most tender fashion. It is kindness. It is kinned-ness, but it is loving kindness. The very heart of God seems written out in this word. We could hardly apply it in full force to any but to our Father who is in Heaven!  
Now here is a subject for us to sing about in the morning! How shall I begin with the hope of going through this subject? It is an endless one. Loving kindness begins—ah, I must correct myself—it never did begin. It had no beginning. “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Everlasting love, therefore, is what we must begin to sing of! And that everlasting love was infinite in its preparations, for before we had been created the Lord had made a Covenant on our account and resolved to give His only-begotten Son, that we might be saved from wrath through Him. The loving kindness of God, our Father, appeared in Jesus Christ. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us always be talking about this!

I wonder why it is, when we meet each other, that we do not begin at once to say, “Brother, have you been thinking over the loving kindness of the Lord in the gift of His dear Son?”—for, indeed, it is such a marvelous thing that it ought not to be a nine-days’ wonder with us. It ought to fill us with astonishment every day of our lives!. Now, if something wonderful happens, everybody’s mouth is full of it and we speak to one another about it at once, while like the Athenians, all our neighbors are greedy to hear. Let our mouths, then, be full of the marvelous loving kindness of God! And for fear we should leave the tale half untold, let us begin early in the morning to rehearse the eternal love manifested in the great gift of Jesus Christ.  
If we have already spoken about these things, and wish for variety, let us speak concerning the loving kindness of God to each one of us in bringing us to Jesus. What a history each man’s own life is! I suppose that if any one of our lives should be fully written, it would be more wonderful than a romance. I have sometimes seen a sunset of which I have said, “Now, if any painter had depicted that, I should have declared that the sky never looked in that way, it is so strange and singular.” And in the same way, should some of our lives be fully written, many would say, “It could not have been so!” How many have said of Huntingdon’s, “Bank of Faith,” for instance, “Oh, it is a bank of nonsense”? Yet I believe that it is correct and bears the marks of truth upon its very face. I believe that the man did experience all that he has written, though he may not always have told us everything in the best possible manner.  
Many other people’s lives would be quite as wonderful as his if they could be written. Speak about, then, the loving kindness of God to yourself in particular. Rehearse, if to no other ear, to your own ear, and to the ear of God, the wondrous story of how—  
*“Jesus sought you when a stranger  
Wandering from the fold of God,”*  
how His Grace brought you to Himself and so into eternal life. And then, Brethren, sing of the loving kindness of God to yourselves since your new birth. Remember the mercies of God! Do not bury them in the grave of ingratitude. Let them glisten in the light of gratitude! I am sure that you will find this a blessed morning portion—it will sweeten all the day. The Psalmist would have you begin the day with it, because you will need all the day to complete it! Indeed, you will need all the days of life and all eternity! And I am half of Addison’s mind—though the expression is somewhat hyperbolical—  
*“But, oh, eternity’s too short  
To utter half Your praise.”*  
What a blessed subject you have before you—the loving kindness of the Lord. Not yourself—not yourself. That is a horrible subject to speak upon. When I hear Brethren get up and glory in their own attainments and graces, I remember the words of the wise man, “Let another praise you, and not your own lips.” Above all things, when a man says that he has made great advances in sanctification it is sickening and clearly proves that he has not learned the meaning of the word “humility.” I hope the eyes of our friends will be opened and that they will come to loathe the devil’s meat which now deceives them. May we no longer see spiritual selfconceit held up among us as a virtue, but may it be shunned as a deadly evil. No, let my mouth be filled with God’s praise, but not with my own! My Brothers and Sisters, let not our tongues be always occupied with our griefs! If you have a skeleton in your house, why should you always invite every friend who calls upon you to inspect the uncomely thing? No! Tell what God has done for you! Tell of His loving kindness! I have heard— and I repeat the story because it ought to be repeated, simple as it is—of a pastor who frequently called upon a poor bedridden woman who, very naturally, always told him of her pains and her needs. He knew all about her rheumatism. He had heard of it 50 times and at last he said to her, “My dear Sister, I sympathize with you deeply, and I am never at all tired of hearing your complaints. But could you not, now and then, tell me something about what the Lord does for you—something about your enjoyments, how He sustains you under your pain, and so on?” It was a rebuke well put and well taken. And ever afterwards there was less said about the griefs and more heard about the blessings! Help us from now on to resolve, Great God, “To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning.”  
Thus we have considered the time and the topic. And now we are bound to observe the manner in which we are to deal with the subject. The Psalmist says we are to show it forth, by which I suppose he means that we are not to keep to ourselves what we know about God’s loving kindness. Every Christian in the morning ought to show it forth, first in his own chamber before God. He should express his gratitude for the mercies of the night and the mercies of his whole life. Then let him, if it is possible, show it forth in his family. Let him gather them together and worship the Lord and bless Him for His loving kindness.  
And then when the Christian goes into the world, let him show forth God’s loving kindness. I do not mean by talking of it to everyone he meets, casting pearls before swine, as it would be to some men, but by the very way in which he speaks, acts and looks. A Christian ought to be the most cheerful of men, so that others should say, “What makes him look so happy? He is not rich. He is not always in good health. He has his troubles, but he seems to bear all so well and to trip lightly along the pathway of life.” By our cheerful conversation we ought to show forth in the morning God’s loving kindness.  
“Ah,” says one, “but when you are depressed in spirit?” Do not show it if you can help it. Do as your Master said—“appear not unto men to fast.” Do not imagine that the appearance of sadness indicates sanctity. It often means hypocrisy. To conceal one’s own griefs for the sake of cheering others betokens a self-denying sympathy which is the highest kind of Christianity. Let us present the sacrifice of praise in whatever company we may be, but when we get among God’s own people, then is the time for a whole burnt offering. Among our own kith and kin we may safely open our box of sweets. When we find a Brother who can understand the loving kindness of the Lord, let us tell it forth with sacred delight.  
We have choice treasures which we cannot show to ungodly eyes, for they would not appreciate them. But when we meet with eyes which God has opened, then let us open the jewelry case and say, “Brother, rejoice in what God has done for us. See His loving kindness to me, His servant, and His tender mercies which have been ever of old.” Thus, beloved Friends, I have set before you a good morning’s work and I think, if God’s Spirit helps us to attend to it, we shall come out of our chambers with our breath smelling sweet with the praises of God! We shall go down into the world without care, much more without anger. We shall go calmly to our work and meet our cares quietly and happily.  
The joy of the Lord will be our strength. It is a good rule never to look into the face of man in the morning till you have looked into the face of God—an equally good rule is to always to have business with Heaven before you have any business with earth. Oh, it is a sweet thing to bathe in the morning in the love of God! To bathe in it so that when you come forth out of the ivory chambers of communion where you have been made glad, your garments shall smell of the myrrh and aloes and cassia of holiness! Do we all attend to this? I am afraid we are in too much of a hurry, or we get up too late. Could we not rise a little earlier? If we could steal even a few minutes from our beds, those few minutes would scatter their influence over the entire day.  
It is always bad to start on a journey without having looked to the harness and to the horse’s shoes. And it often happens that the time saved by omitting examination turns out to be a dead loss when the traveler has advanced a little on his journey. Not one minute, but a hundred minutes may be lost by the lack of a little attention at first! Set the morning watch with care if you would be safe through the day. Begin well if you would end well. Take care that the helm of the day is put right. Look well to the point you want to sail to, then whether you make much progress or little, it will be so far in the right direction. The morning hour is generally the index of the day.  
II. Now, let us turn to the second part of our subject very briefly. The Psalmist says, “To show forth Your faithfulness EVERY NIGHT. Now, the night, Beloved, is a peculiarly choice time for praising God’s faithfulness. “Oh,” says one, “we are very tired.” Well, that may be, but it is a pity that we should be reduced to such a condition that we are too tired to praise God! A holy man of God always used to say, when they said to him, “Can you pray?” “Thank God, I am never too tired to pray.” If anything can awaken us, the service of Christ should do it! There should be, within us, an enthusiasm which kindles at the very thought of prayer! Have you ever known an army on the march, weary and ready to drop, and the band played some enlivening tune which has bestirred the men afresh? They have gone over the last few miles as they could not have done if it had not been for the inspiration of the strain! Let the thought of praising God wake up our wearied energies and let not God be robbed of His Glory at the close of the day! The close of the day is calm, quiet and fit for devotion. God walked in the garden in the cool of the day, before man fell, and Adam went forth to meet Him. Isaac walked in the fields at eventide and there he received a blessing. The evening is the Sunday of the day and should be the Lord’s.  
Now, notice the topic which is set for the evening. It is faithfulness. Why? Why, because we have had a little more experience of our God! We have a day’s more experience than we had in the morning—therefore we have more power to sing of God’s faithfulness. We look back, now, upon the day and see promises fulfilled. May I ask you to look over today, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ? Can you not notice some promises which God has kept towards you? Show forth His faithfulness, then. Provision has been given you—He promised to give it—He has given it. Protection has been afforded you—more than you know of, infinitely more! Guidance, also, has been given in points where you otherwise would have gone very much astray.

Illumination has been granted you. Comfort, also, in a season of depression, or upholding in a time of temptation. God has given you much, today. If He has taken anything away from you, yet still bless His name! It was only what He had given and He had a right to take it. Look through the day and you will find that God has acted towards you as He promised that He would act. You have had trouble, you say. Did not He say, “In the world you shall have tribulation”? Has He not spoken concerning the rod of the Covenant? Affliction only illustrates His faithfulness. Carefully observe the fulfilled promises of each day—it is a good custom to conclude the day by rehearsing its special mercies. I do not believe in keeping a detailed diary of each day’s experience, for one is very apt, for lack of something to put down, to write what is not true, or at least not real. I believe there is nothing more stilted or untruthful, as a general rule, than a religious diary—it easily degenerates into self-deceit. Still, most days, it not all our days, reveal singular instances of Providence if we will but watch for them. Master Flavel used to say, “He that notices Providences shall never be without a Providence to notice.” I believe we let our days glide by us unobservant of the wondrous things that are in them and so miss many enjoyments. As in Nature the uneducated person sees but little beauty in the wild flowers—  
*“The primrose by the river’s brim,  
A yellow primrose is to him,  
And it is nothing more,”*  
so we, for lack of thought, let great mercies go by us. They are trivial to us, and nothing more. Oh, let us change our ways and think more of what God has done, and then we shall utter a song concerning His faithfulness every night!  
Do you notice, in the text, that word, “every.” It does not say, “to show forth His loving kindness every morning,” though it means that. But concerning the nights it is very distinct. “And His faithfulness every night.” It is a cold night. Did He not promise winter? And now it has come, the cold only proves His faithfulness. It is a dark night, but then it is a part of His Covenant that there should be nights as well as days. Supposing that there were no nights and no winters—where were the Covenant which God made with the earth? But every change of temperature in the beautiful changes of the year, and every variation of light and shade only illustrate the faithfulness of God!  
If you happen, now, to be full of joy, you can tell of Divine faithfulness in rendering love and mercy to you, but if, on the other hand, you are full of trouble, tell of God’s faithfulness, for now you have an opportunity of proving it! He will not leave you. He will not forsake you. His Word is, “When you pass through the rivers I will be with you: the floods shall not overflow you.” Depend upon it, that promise will be faithfully fulfilled. Beloved Friends, you who are getting old are nearing the night of life, you are peculiarly fitted to show forth the Lord’s faithfulness. The young people may tell of His loving kindness, but the old people must tell of His faithfulness. You can speak of 40 or 50 years of God’s Grace to you! And you can confidently affirm that He has not once failed you. He has been true to every Word that He has spoken.  
Now, I charge you, do not withhold your testimony! If we, young people, should be silent we would be guilty, but we might speak, perhaps, another day. But for you advanced Christians to be silent will be sinful, indeed, for you will not have another opportunity in this world of showing forth the faithfulness of God. Bear witness now, before your eyes are closed in death! The faithfulness of God every night is a noble subject for His grayheaded servants. And this it is your great business to show forth. O Beloved, let us publish abroad the faithfulness of God! I wonder, sometimes, that there should be any doubts in the world about the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the saints—and I think the reason why there are any is this—those professors who fall are very conspicuous, everybody knows about them.  
If a high-flying professor makes a foul end of his boasts, why, that is talked of everywhere! They speak of it in Gath and publish it in the streets of Askelon! But, on the other hand, those thousands of true Believers that hold on their way, they cannot, of course, say much about themselves. It would not be right they should, but I wish they would, sometimes, say more about the unfailing goodness and immutable truthfulness of God— to be a check to the effect produced by backsliders—so that the world may know that the Lord does not cast away His people whom He did foreknow, but that He gives strength to them even in their fainting and bears them through.  
If there is any one topic that you Christians ought to speak about thankfully, bravely, positively, continuously, it is the faithfulness of God to you! It is that upon which Satan makes a dead aim in the minds of many tempted ones and, therefore, to that you should bring the strength of your testimony, that tried saints may know that He does not forsake His people.  
III. And now, to close, I desire in the name of God’s people here present, TO SHOW FORTH GOD’S FAITHFULNESS THIS VERY NIGHT. My Brothers and Sisters, as a Church, let us declare how faithful God has been to us! Our history as a Church has been very wonderful. When we were few and feeble, and brought low, God appeared for us. Then we began to prosper and we began, also, to pray. And what prayers they were! Surely the more we prayed the more God blessed us. We have now had almost 20 years of uninterrupted blessing. We have had no fits and starts. We have not sponsored revivals and retreats—but onward has been our course, in the name of God, a steady, continued progress—like the growth of a cedar upon Lebanon.  
Up to this time God has always heard prayer in this place. This very building was an answer to prayer. There is scarcely an institution connected with it but what can write upon its banner, “We have been blessed by a prayer-hearing God.” It has become our habit to pray and it is God’s habit to bless us. Oh, let us not waver! Let us not hesitate! If we do, we shall be straitened in ourselves, but not in God. God will not leave us while we prove Him in His own appointed way. If we will but continue mighty in earnest intercession, we may, as a Church, enjoy another 20 years, if it so pleases God, of equal or greater prosperity! If ever there was a spot on earth where it became men to speak well of a faithful God, it is the spot where I stand, and I do speak of it to His Glory!  
We have used no carnal attractions to gather people together to worship here. We have procured nothing to please their taste by way of elaborate music, fine dress, painted windows, processions and the like. We have used the Gospel of Jesus without any rhetorical embellishments, simply spoken as a man speaks to his friend—and God has blessed it— and He will bless it still! Now, dear Friends, each one of you can say of yourselves, as well as of the Church, that God has been faithful to you. Tell it to your children. Tell them God will save sinners when they come to Him, for He saved you! Tell it to your neighbors. Tell them He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins if we confess them to Him, and to save us from all unrighteousness, for He forgave you.  
Tell every trembler you meet with that Jesus will in nowise cast out any that come to Him. Tell all seekers that if they seek they shall find, and that to everyone that knocks, the door of mercy shall be opened. Tell the most desponding and despairing that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief. Make known His faithfulness every night. And when your last night comes and you gather up your feet in the bed, like Jacob, let your last testimony be to the Lord’s faithfulness! And like glorious old Joshua, end your life by saying, “Not one good thing has failed of all the Lord God has promised, but all has come to pass.” The Lord bless you, dear Friends, and give you all to know His loving kindness and His faithfulness. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 92.  
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BLESSED DISCIPLINE  
NO. 2374

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, AUGUST 19, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 24, 1888.

**“Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD, and teach out of Your Law; that You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked. For the LORD will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.”  
Psalm 94:12-15.**

THERE are times when the wicked seem to have things all their own way. This earth is not the realm of final justice—we are not yet standing before the Lord’s great Judgement Seat. God permits many things to be, for a while, in confusion. They who are highest with Him are often lowest with men and, those for whom He has no regard seem to heap up the treasures of the world till their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart can wish! Let no child of God be astonished at this arrangement. It has often been so in the past and it has been the great enigma that has puzzled the world. The children of God have also sat down and looked into it, but it has been, even to them, a great deep which they could not fathom. They have sighed over it, but their sighs have not altered the facts. It is still true that often the wicked triumph and the servants of iniquity delight themselves in the high places of the earth. The righteous need not wonder that they suffer, now, for that has been the lot of God’s people all along, and there have been certain times in human history when God has seemed to be altogether deaf to the cries of His suffering people. Remember the martyr age and the days of the Covenanters, who were hunted upon the mountains like the partridge. You must not wonder if the easy places of the earth are not yours and if the sentinel’s stern duties should fall to your lot. It is so, and so it must be, for God has so ordained it.

To comfort any of the Lord’s children who have begun to worry themselves because things do not go with them as they desire, I have selected this text, and I pray the Lord to bless it to them.

I. First, I shall ask you to notice that GOD’S CHILDREN ARE UNDER INSTRUCTION.  
Other children may run about and take holiday. They may wander into the woods, gather the flowers and do very much what they like, but God’s own children have to go to school. This is a great privilege for them, although they do not always think so. Children are not often good judges of what is best for themselves. No doubt we should like to play the truant—we should be very glad to put away our schoolbags, quit the schoolhouse, go out by ourselves and wander at our own sweet will—but our heavenly Father loves us too well to let it be so with us. Because we are His children, therefore He will have us trained and prepared for that high destiny which awaits us, by-and-by.  
Note how this tuition is described in our text. The very first word concerning it is, “chasten.” “Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach,” as if the chastening were the primary part of the teaching, as if it occupied so large a share of it that it was put first. “Blessed is the man whom you chasten, O Lord, and teach.” In God’s school house the rod is still extant—with the Lord, chastening is teaching. He does not spoil His children, but chastens them, yes, even unto scourging, as the Apostle puts it. His chastening is the most severe with those whom He loves best—“Whom the Lord tenderly loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” Some of us know what it is to have this teaching by chastening. I have often told you that I am afraid I have never learned anything of God except by the rod and, in looking back, I am afraid that I must confirm that statement. I have forgotten some of the gentle lessons, but when they have been whipped into me, I have remembered them.  
I met with a friend the other day who said that it was the very reverse with him. He could not remember any benefit that he had ever gained by chastening and he thought that all the good he had received from the Lord had come to him by tenderness and prosperity. I did not argue with him about the matter, for the experiences of God’s people may differ, but this I know, dear Friends, that some of us have learned much from the Lord’s chastening rod!  
For instance, we have learned the evil of sin. “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Your Word.” There are some sorrows that evidently come as the result of our own folly. We have to reap the harvest of the seed that we sow and, by this process we are made to see that it is an exceedingly evil and bitter thing to sin against God. This is an important lesson. I wish that more had thoroughly learned it. I wish that some Christian professors had anything like a true idea of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, but I believe that instruction upon this point often comes from the chastening hand of God.  
Our chastening teaches us the unsatisfactory nature of worldly things. We can easily become attached to the things which we possess. It is a very difficult thing to handle gold without allowing it to adhere to your fingers and, when it gets into your purse, you need much Grace to prevent it getting into your heart. Even our children can soon grow into idols—and our health and our comfort may make us forget God. I never knew affliction and trial to make us do that, but when the gourds are taken away, then the sun shines on us. How often has God shaken all the leaves off our trees and then we have seen the heavens which we never saw when all the leaves were green! By losing this, and losing that, we are made to feel that all the things which we possess perish in the using and are such temporary joys that we cannot hope to fill our hearts with them.  
Do we not, also, learn by affliction our own frailty and our own impatience? We are wonderfully patient when we have nothing to suffer, as we are all great heroes and very courageous when there is no fighting to be done. We sometimes say to one another, “What a mass of faith that Brother has! What a vast mountain of faith that Sister possesses!” We are almost inclined to envy them, but we remember the fable of the stag which had such magnificent antlers that he said to himself, as he looked at his fine figure in the water, “It is most absurd for us stags to be afraid of dogs. The next time I hear a dog bark, I will just toss him on my horns and there will soon be an end of him.” Yes, so he thought, but just then the baying of a hound was heard in the distance and the boastful stag took to his heels and ran as fast as the rest of the herd did! So it is often with those who seem to have great faith when they do not need it—but when they do need it, where is it? Stretch some men upon a bed of sickness for a week or two and see whether they will be able to swagger at the rate they now do! They would sing another song, I guarantee you, if once they had such a twist of pain as some of us have had to endure, and the beads of perspiration stood on their brow while they tried to bear it. Ah, yes, we find how great our weakness is when first, one thing is taken away, and then another, and the chastening hand of God makes the blows to fall thick and heavy upon us!  
Do we not, then, learn also, the value of prayer? I said to this friend to whom I have referred, “Did you not pray much more under your affliction than you did before?” “Oh, yes!” he replied. “I grant you that—

*Trials give new life to prayer.”*

Do we ever pray in such dead earnest as when everything seems to be sinking from under our feet and our sweetest cups are full of bitterness? Then we turn to God and say, “Show me why You contend with me.” I do not think that we ever pray with such fervor of supplication in our prosperity as we do in our adversity.

And then how precious the promises become! As we only see the stars when the shadows gather at night, so the promises shine out like newlykindled stars when we get into the night of affliction! I am sure that there are passages of Scripture which are full of consolation, the depths of which we do not even imagine—and we shall never know all that is in them till we get into the deeps of soul trouble which correspond with them. There are points of view from which scenery is to be beheld at its best and, until we find out those points of view, we may be missing the sight of some of the most beautiful objects in nature! God leads us one way and another by our chastisements to understand and prize His promises.

And, oh, dear Friends, how should we ever know the faithfulness of God if it were not for affliction? We might talk about it and theoretically understand it, but to try to prove the greatness of Jehovah’s love and the absolute certainty of His eternal faithfulness—this comes not except by the way of affliction and trial!

I might talk on forever about the sweet uses of adversity and not exhaust the subject. You experienced people of God know even more than I do about this matter, for some of you have done business in deeper waters than my boat has yet plowed, and yet, I think my keel has passed over the deep places of the sea of trouble, and there may be deeper depths before me still. I have probably said enough to prove to you that chastening is a Divine way of instructing us. You will find that if you want the most Christ-like saints, and the most deeply experimental Believers, and the Christians who are best acquainted with the Word of God, you must look for them among those who are the most intimately acquainted with the fiery furnace and its burning heat.

If you read the text through, dear Friends, you will notice that the rod is not without the Word. I call your special attention to that—“Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach Him out of Your Law.” The rod and the Book go together! The rod drives us to the Book and the Book explains the meaning of the rod! We must have them both if we would be fully instructed in the things of God. The Word of God is our school book. At first, it is our primer, and when we get furthest advanced in Grace, it will be our most profound classic! And all the way along it will supply us with our choicest poetry and everything else that we desire.

We look to the Bible for comfort when we are chastened—we turn over its pages and seek to find a passage which fits our case and ministers relief to our necessity. Have you not often done so? Why, this Book is something like the locksmith’s bunch of keys! Perhaps you have lost the key of your drawer and you cannot get at your things. You send for the smith and he keeps on trying different keys till, at last, he finds one that exactly fits the wards of your lock. So, if you keep on fingering away at the promises, you will come, at last, upon one that was made on purpose for your case! Perhaps your lock is one with very peculiar wards—you could never make out why it was shaped just as it is—but now that you have found the key that opens it, you understand that both lock and key were made to fit each other.

The Word of God is not only used at such times for comfort, but also for direction. How frequently you have been unable to see your way! You have wished that there was some Prophet of God with the Urim and Thummim, that he might tell you what to do. The great guiding principles of God’s Truth, His Law and His Gospel, faith in Him and in His Providential care, have furnished you with a direction quite as clear as if some Prophet had plainly told you what to do. You have sought the direction of the Word of the Lord when you have gone to enquire in His Temple—He has answered you out of the secret place of thunder—and you have known without a doubt the way that you should take.

That, then, is the second use of the Word, first for comfort, and next for direction.  
At such times, too, we have proved, dear Friends, the

 power of the Word of God. When your vessel is sailing along very smoothly, the Word of God may grow to be a dead letter with you, but when the waves are rolling mountains high, and dashing over you, and you are soaked through and through and fear that the deep will swallow you up, then you begin to test the promises and to prove the power of the Word of God! When its inexpressible sweetness reaches your heart, then you can, indeed, feel that you have been taught out of God’s Word. You see how the two things go together—“Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach Him out of Your Law.” O Lord, still use the rod if You see that it is necessary. But go on teaching us out of Your Word! We are slow to learn and poor scholars at the best, but You may yet make something of us.  
That leads me to say that, according to our text, God Himself is our Teacher. He is not satisfied with giving us a Book and smiting us when we are inattentive to its teachings, but He, Himself, teaches us. Was there ever a Teacher so full of wisdom, a Teacher who understood His pupils so well, a Teacher so altogether master of the whole art of teaching? Was there ever a Teacher so patient, so able to apply His lessons to the heart, itself, so full of power to give understanding as well as to make the thing clear to the understanding when it is given? Happy people, who have God to be their Tutor! Happy pupils, even though, when the school bell rings, you have half a mind to stay away and play with yonder children who do not belong to your school! Yet happy are you if you are truly God’s scholars. Even if, every now and then, your days are spent in weeping, and your lessons are so badly done that they bring the rod upon you, yet are you happy children. “Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach Him out of Your Law.”  
So much, then, for our first head.  
II. Now upon our second point I will say a little, and only a little. We have had God’s children under instruction. Now let us think of GOD’S CHILDREN EDUCATED. The Lord has chastened and taught His child for this purpose—“That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked.” “What?” you ask, “chastened to give us rest? It is usual for chastening to break our rest.” Yes, I know that it is so with other chastening, but in very deed this is the way in which God gives rest to His people.  
First, we learn to rest in the will of God. Our will is naturally very stubborn and when we are chastened, at first we fight back, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, but by degrees we feel that we must bear the yoke. We then go a little further and we feel that we ought to bear it, even though God should lay upon us anything He pleases, and we should feel it very galling. By-and-by, the yoke begins to fit our neck and we come even to love it. I do not suppose that many of us will ever get like Samuel Rutherford, when he said that he began to wonder which he loved better—Christ or his cross—for his cross had brought him so much blessing that he was quite in love with it. No, we have not reached that point, yet, so that we love our cross—still, we can say this, that we have learned that it is—  
*“Sweet to lie passive in His hands,  
And know no will but His.”*

If we struggle against God’s will, we only increase our sorrow. Our selfwill usually lies at the root of our greatest griefs. Give way, and you have won! Yield to God and you have obtained the blessing you desire. The bitterness is gone out of your grief when you consent to be grieved if God will have it so.

We make advances in our spiritual education when we learn to rest after our afflictions. When any trouble is over, great delights often come to us. It is with us as it was with our Master—He had been with the wild beasts—worse, still, He had been tempted of the devil. But angels came and ministered to Him. There is, to a Believer, sometimes, a wonderfully clear shining after the rain. Perhaps there is no happier period of life than the state of convalescence, when the sick man is gradually recovering his former strength after a long illness. So God gives surprising peace to His people when He takes away their troubles, but He also gives them a great measure of peace in their troubles. Thus, for another lesson, we learn to rest in adversity. The Lord chastens us in order that we may learn how to stand fast and bear up bravely while the trouble is yet upon us.

I have often had to notice the singularity of my Lord’s loving kindness and tenderness to myself in the time of need. I do not say that it is singularity for Him, for He is often doing it, but the singularity lies in the fact that the Lord does it when nobody else could or would do it. He gives us comfort when nobody else is either willing or able to render any comfort to us. This very afternoon I have had a remarkable instance of how good cheer is sent to me by my gracious God just when I most need it. I was heavy and sad at heart and there came to my door, to see me, a foreign gentleman, an officer of considerable rank in the Italian army. He spoke to me in very good English, but I cannot tell you all that he said to me, though it was most cheering and kind. I asked him why he should come so far to see me.

He spoke of me as though I were a great man and I assured him that he was quite mistaken, for I was nothing of the kind. As we walked along and talked, he said, “But you are the greatest man in all the world to me.” “Why is that?” I asked. And He answered, “I was a Catholic, and a bad Catholic, too. I did not rightly know anything about the Lord Jesus Christ and I was fast becoming an infidel. But I met with a sermon of yours in Italian and, by reading it, I was brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. I found the Savior and I felt that I must come and tell you about it.” Then he further cheered and encouraged my heart by letting me see how much he knew of our Lord Jesus—and he had learned it all from nothing but the Bible, itself—which he had read after being guided to it by a stray sermon of mine.

“Well,” I thought, “my Master sends this man all the way from the south of Italy to come just at this particular time, when I was sorely needing just such a comforting message.” Why should He do so? Only that He likes, when His children have to take bitter medicine, to give them a piece of sugar after it! Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters, be willing to take your medicine, otherwise there may come a sharp chastening with it. Oh, for Grace so to suffer, and so to endure, that we may give ourselves up into the hands of the Ever-Blessed One, and thus He will perfect in us the instruction of His wonderful Word! Then shall it be true that the Lord has taught us to rest even in the days of our adversity.

Much more might be said upon this part of my subject, especially about learning to look beyond this present life, but I have not the time or the strength to say it.  
III. I must now go on to the third point which is that GOD’S CHILDREN ARE STILL DEAR TO HIM. We have thought of them at school, chastened and instructed, and we have seen them learning a few lessons. Now let us notice how dear they are to their Lord at all times, for the text says, “The Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance.”

First, then, the Lord will not cast off His people. Sometimes you are cast down, but you are never cast off. Sometimes others cast you off, but the Lord will not cast off His people! Sometimes you are cast into the furnace. Yes, it may be so, but in the furnace you are not cast off. Metal put into the furnace is not thrown away. Had it been worthless, it might have been left on the heap with the slag. But it is put into the furnace because it is of value. When you are put into the furnace and into the greatest heat that can be obtained, it is that the Lord may take away your dross and purify you for His service—

*“In the furnace God may prove you.  
There to bring you forth more bright.  
But can never cease to love you—  
You are precious in His sight!  
God is with you,  
God, your everlasting light.”*

“The Lord will not cast off His people.” Lay hold of that precious assurance! Even if Satan should come and whisper to you, “The Lord has cast you off,” do not believe it! It cannot be. The devil has his cast-offs, but God has no cast-offs. Sometimes He takes the devil’s castaways and makes them to be the trophies of His mighty Grace—and when He has done so, they are His people, concerning whom the Psalmist says, “The Lord will not cast off His people.”

Then, further, the Lord will not forsake His people, for it is added, “Neither will He forsake His inheritance.” He chose them to be His inheritance. He has bought them as His inheritance and He will never forsake them! Still shall you be supported by the Lord, but never forsaken by Him! Still shall you be owned by Him, but never forsaken. Still shall you be kept, defended against all comers, and preserved to be the Lord’s own people, for He will not forsake His inheritance!

I do not feel as if I need say much more upon this theme, but it is enough for me, I think, just to remind you of those precious Words of our great and gracious Father which are many times repeated in His Word, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” and leave them with you, His children. Take them and feed upon them! God give you to know the full comfort of them!

IV. So I shall close with this fourth point—GOD’S PEOPLE WILL BE RIGHTED IN THE END. “Judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.”

Just now, judgement has gone away. It has gone up to its own land. Judgment is within the veil, but there are reasons for its absence from us. Judgment has gone away, perhaps, that it may try the faith of God’s people. The Lord does not, today, strike down the profane, nor slay the hypocrite, as He might if He dealt with them in strict justice. Judgment has gone out of the world for a while, though it watches and records all things. It is gone, partly, for our trial and testing, that we may learn to trust an absent God and Savior. Judgment is also gone away in order that mercy may be extended to the ungodly, that they may live and that they may turn to God, for He wills not the death of any, but that they may turn to Him and live. Judgment has gone up to the Throne for a while until the wicked shall have completed the full measure of their sin, “until the pit is dug for the wicked.” Not yet is the iniquity of the Amorites full—and judgment has gone away and will stay away until it is.

Do not be in a hurry, child of God! The Lord has timed His absence. Listen to this next Word—“Judgement shall return unto righteousness.” You shall soon hear the trumpet. You shall hear the sound of that blast, “the loudest and the last,” telling you that the day of the great assize has come and that the Judge has arrived to right all wrongs, to punish all iniquity and to reward all virtue, all true, faithful service! “Judgment shall return.” We cannot tell how long it will linger, but it will return. Christ will come again! As surely as He ascended into Heaven, He will so come in like manner as He went up. He shall judge the earth in righteousness and His people with His Truth. Behold, He comes! And when He comes, judgment shall return unto righteousness.

And what then? Judgement shall be welcomed by the godly. When it comes, “all the upright in heart shall follow it.” The chariot of righteousness shall lead the way and all the people of God shall follow it in a glorious procession. Then shall they receive their Lord’s commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” They shall follow it as they wear their golden crowns, no, as they cast them at the foot of the Throne of God, saying, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power.” Saints will follow the chariot of judgment coming forth from their concealment and shining as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father! They shall come from the places where slander has banished them and show themselves, again, and God shall be glorified in them! Now you who love the Lord, be not in a hurry to have all this fulfilled. Leave your cases in the dear hands of Him who will, ere long, judge all righteously.

I have done when I have reminded you that He is accursed who has never felt the chastening hand of God, or sat at His feet to learn of Him. But he is blessed, indeed, who yields himself entirely up to the discipline of the Lord. May it be so with everyone of you, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
Let us read, this evening, the 94th Psalm, and may the Spirit of God instruct us while we read it!

Verse 1. O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs; O God, to whom vengeance belongs, show Yourself. God is the God of Justice and when iniquity and oppression prevail, it is natural that His people should call upon Him to come forth out of His hiding places. Sometimes, when oppression and iniquity and error prevail, it seems as if God had hidden Himself away. Hence the prayer of the Psalmist, “O Jehovah, the God of recompenses (or revenges, as the margin has it), show Yourself.”

2. Lift up Yourself, You judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. As one who is about to strike a heavy blow lifts himself up to increase the force of the stroke, so the Psalmist prays to the Lord, “Lift up Yourself, You Judge of the earth. The proud are lifted up; lift up Yourself. They boast, they glory, Lord, show them how great a God You are in the defense of righteousness; lift up Yourself, You Judge of the earth.”

3. LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? That question, “how long?” uttered twice over, sounds a little like howling, and, sometimes, God’s saints get so dispirited that they cry to God and weep and wail before Him until their wailing becomes almost like howling—“Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?”

4, 5. How long shall they utter and speak hard things? And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, and afflict Your heritage. Their words are heavier than stones and when they hurl them at the Lord’s people with cruel intent, they do great mischief. “They utter and speak hard things. All the workers of iniquity boast themselves.” It seems to be the mark of the righteous that they are humble and lowly—and the mark of the wicked that they are boastful and proud. They have nothing of which they ought to boast, yet they boast very loudly. Pride is ingrained in our evil nature and the more there is of sin in us, the more there is of boasting by us.

6. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Do you wonder that the Psalmist prayed, “O God of Vengeance, show Yourself”? Can you see the fatherless robbed and the widow and the stranger oppressed, without feeling your indignation burn? He who is never indignant has no virtue in him! He who cannot burn like coals of juniper against evil does not truly love righteousness. The Psalmist was not a man of that sort—he was righteously angry with the wicked who slew the widow and the stranger—and murdered the fatherless.

7. Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. They were practically atheists, for, if they had a god, nominally, they regarded him as a god who did not observe sins, a blind deity, a god who took no note of evil! Do you not think that this is the prevailing religion of today? Are there not many who say, “Jehovah shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it”? God is not in all their thoughts. He is, to them, a nonentity, not the Omniscient Jehovah and hardly even a person, but a kind of secondary power or a feeble force—an unknown something or other of not much account—“Jehovah shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.”

8. Understand, you brutish among the people. When a man turns away from God, he casts off his manhood. He ceases to be a man and becomes like a brute, a boar, for so this expression might be read, “You boars among the people.”

8, 9. And you fools, when will you be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? Did the Lord make men’s ears, and put them near the brain in the very best place for hearing, and shall He not, Himself, hear? The argument is overwhelming! God gave us ears and made us hear—is He, Himself, deaf?

9. He that formed the eye, shall He not see? God makes all eyes. Is He without eyes? The supposition is an absurdity! It needs only to be mentioned to be held up to ridicule. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?”—

*“Shall He who, with transcendent skill,  
Fashioned the eye and formed the ear—  
Who modeled nature to His will—  
Shall He not see? Shall He not hear?”*

10. He that chastises the heathen, shall not He correct? Whole nations were driven out of Canaan to make room for Israel. Many other nations have been crushed, doubled up, utterly destroyed on account of their sin. Everybody who reads history knows that this has been the case, so the Psalmist argues, “He that chastises the heathen, shall not He correct?” He that executes judgment upon heathen nations, can He not deal with sinful man and with single individuals? He that broke the power of Persia, Assyria, Greece and Rome—will He not punish guilty men when they dare to set themselves up as oppressors of His people?

10. He that teaches man knowledge, shall not He know? Our translators finish the question by putting, “Shall not He know?” But those words are not in the original and they are not at all necessary to the argument. It is as if the Psalmist abruptly broke off his utterances, as much as to say, “It is of no use arguing with you fellows,” or else as if he said, “Finish my sentence, yourselves—I put the truth so clearly before you that there is no escaping from it.” “He that teaches man knowledge.” If God has taught men all that they know, does not He, Himself, know all that is to be known? The Psalmist does not say so much as that in words, but he leaves us to draw that as the only inference from what he says.

11. The LORD knows the thoughts of man. God knows not only men’s words and acts, but also their thoughts. God knows thoughtful men, the best sort of men, when they are at their best, when they are thinking. And what does God think of the thoughts of man?

11. That they are vanity. Yet people talk about the thoughtful men of the age and want us to bow down and worship their thoughts! This boasting about man’s thoughts is only like the cracking of rotten sticks! “The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”

12. Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD, and teach him out of Your Law. Here is the truly blessed man—not the boaster, not the infidel, not the proud thinker—but the Divinely-chastened man! He is sore through the chastening of the Lord, his bones are full of pain, his heart is heavy and his home, perhaps, is a place of torture to him, but still it is true that he is a blessed man—“Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach him out of Your Law.”

13. That You may give him rest, from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked. Christ has gone to prepare Heaven for His people. It is a prepared place for a prepared people. So is it with the ungodly and their eternal inheritance—it is a prepared place, “prepared for the devil and his angels.” And when men make themselves like demons and so, are ripe for Hell, then is the pit ready to receive them!

14. For the Lord will not cast out His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance. If any of you are deeply troubled, I counsel you to get a hold of this promise! Perhaps it seems to you as if two seas of sorrow had met around you and that you were in a whirlpool of trouble. Then I say again, lay hold of this text and grip it firmly—“Jehovah will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance.”

15, 16. But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it. Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will rise up for me against the workers of iniquity? Well, David, you may ask the question, but we cannot tell you who among your fellow men will stand up for you! It sometimes happens that God’s people are left without an earthly friend. Their case is so hard, their cause involves so much question, so much shame, perhaps, that nobody will stand up for them. If this is your trying condition just now, listen to the Psalmist’s testimony—

17. Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. If it had not been for God, he would not only have had no hand to help him, but not even a voice to speak for him! He might not have suffered quite in silence, because he would have, himself, spoken, but what he would have said would only have made the matter worse. What would he have said if he had broken the silence?

18. When I said, My foot slips. “It is going, it is gone! My foot is now slipping”—what then?  
18. Your mercy, O LORD, held me up. God is grand at holding up His people in slippery places—and not only in slippery places—but when their feet actually slip. When they think that they are gone, they are not really gone. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Your mercy, O Lord, held me up.”  
19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me—“I cannot collect my thoughts—they will not be gathered into orderly array. They rush to and fro, there is a multitude, a mob of them.” It is good to have thoughts, but sometimes you may have too many of them, and they may come helterskelter, blasphemous thoughts, perhaps, despairing, proud, unbelieving, all sorts of thoughts! “In the multitude of my thoughts within me”—  
19. Your comforts delight my soul. “Comforts which You bring me, comforts which arise from thoughts of You, the comforts of the Comforter, the comforts of the God of All Comfort, Your comforts delight my soul.” You must often have noticed that troubles seldom come alone. If you get one trial, you will probably have a whole covey of them. It very rarely happens, I think, to any one of us to have a lone sorrow. In another place the Psalmist says, “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterspouts; all Your waves and Your billows are gone over me.” It is so with some of us at this time—we have a multitude of troubled thoughts within us. But have you also noticed that God’s mercies do not come alone? They come in flocks! The Psalmist says, “Your comforts”—not merely one comfort, but a great host of them—“Your comforts delight my soul.” they not merely sustain me, and keep me alive, but they delight my soul. God never does anything in halves—when He gives us comfort, He does it thoroughly. The Lord’s flowers bloom double! He gives us not only comfort, but delight—“Your comforts delight my soul.” Now the Psalmist turns to God in prayer and says—  
20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with You, which frames mischief by a law? Oh, how strong are the wicked! They think they can have everything their own way, that they can make what laws they like and crush out anything that they despise! Yes, there are many thrones of iniquity, but God has no fellowship with them! And if God has no fellowship with a throne, that throne will tumble down—God will not uphold it. The day will come when He will no longer tolerate its iniquity and then one blow of His mighty right hand shall shiver it to atoms!  
21. They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn innocent blood. Agreed about nothing else, they all agree against Christ and against the holy seed—“the soul of the righteous.” They would blot out the righteous from under Heaven if they could.  
22. But the LORD is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge. I commend these expressions to all Believers, let them treasure them up. “My God.” Ah, you must personally appropriate God to yourself if He is to bless you! Another man’s god is nothing to you unless you can also say, “My God.” When you have said, “My God,” you have uttered the grandest words that human lips can frame! If God is yours, all things are yours— earth and Heaven, time and eternity! “My God is the rock of my refuge.” You are on the Rock. You are in the Rock. You are behind the Rock. You must be safe now.  
23. And He shall bring upon them their own iniquity. That is the punishment of sin. It seems strange that it is so, but sin is the punishment of sin. When a man has once sinned, it is part of his punishment that he is inclined to sin, again, and so on, ad infinitum. “He shall bring upon them their own iniquity.”  
23. And shall cut them off in their own wickedness. It needs no fire nor worm to torment the ungodly—their own wickedness, itself, is fire, worm and pit without a bottom—and the Hell that ends not.  
23. Yes, the LORD our God shall cut them off—  
*“Surrounded by His saints, the Lord  
Shall, armed with holy vengeance, come  
To each his final lot award  
And seal the sinner’s fearful doom.”*  
God save us from being of that company! May we all be numbered with His people forever and ever! Amen.

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

**“In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.” Psalm 94:19.**

GODLY people are thoughtful people. Indeed, it is often a sign of the beginning of Grace in a man when he begins to consider. Lack of thought has to do with the ruin of most of those who perish—it is not so much that they despise as that they neglect the great salvation. They have no time for thinking. They fly through life like mere butterflies and they rush upon destruction like wanton moths. Alas, that they should be so brutish! It is shameful and grievous that men whose noblest attribute is an intellect akin to angels should live like “dumb, driven cattle.” Even men who call themselves religious often seek for priests or ministers to do their thinking for them. They cannot be induced to give personal heed to their eternal welfare.

Good men are, none the less, full of thought because they are men of faith—believing is not the death of thinking, it is the sanctification of it. When our Savior said, according to our version, “Take no thought,” He was very far from meaning what those words would seem to imply. He meant take no carking care, no anxious thought. It was anxiety, not prudence, which He condemned. Christians are among the most thoughtful and contemplative of men. It is the foolish man who leaps before he looks and therefore often looks backward with vain regret after he has leaped. Men of Belial hate meditation, but men of God delight in it. The Gospel excites thoughts and perfumes them. It does not allow the mind to lie fallow, but sows it with heavenly seed from which spring meditations of the Truth of God, contemplations of purity and purposes of virtue.

Believing in God opens up to us the stores of Divine wisdom and then, by holy meditation, we feed on them. Faith gathers the handfuls of sacred corn from which contemplation threshes out the ears and prepares soulsustaining bread. Gracious men take much account of their thoughts and make a conscience of them. Other men are scarcely alarmed in conscience by their actions unless they happen to commit some glaring crime. But the saint has lost his heart of stone and his heart of flesh is conscious of God’s displeasure and trembles at it when an impure thought has defiled his soul. Regenerates have sensitive minds so that a word wrongly spoken grieves them sorely. And if it should never go so far as a word, but only an evil thought like an unclean bird flits through their mind, they are troubled lest they should have invited or secretly entertained so foul a lodger.

They dread the sparks of desire, for they know what flames may be kindled by them. They have a horror of sin in any shape—it is a deadly poison—and they dread the very odor of it. If they thought that they had lost their sensitiveness in any degree it would grieve them and make them pray—

*“Quick as the apple of an eye,  
O God, my conscience make;  
Awake my heart when sin is near,  
And keep it still awake.”*

They judge their thoughts severely and cannot be induced to imagine that they are mere trifles. In this they are fully justified, for thought is the foundation and formation of character. “As a man thinks in his heart so is he.” If you had not thought of evil you had never spoken it. If your thought had never conceived, your hand had never executed. Thoughts lie upon the anvil like rough iron and time hammers them into actions. If there were no plastic clay of evil thoughts there were no potters’ vessels of evil deeds. The thought is the man, the essence of himself, the core of his humanity. The outward act is but the bone—the marrow lies in the motive intent and design—therefore he who desires to be right looks mainly at his thoughts.

And as thought makes character—and therefore good men cannot afford to trifle with it—so thought makes happiness or woe. In the present life it is certainly so. Many a man never possessed a diamond or a chain of gold, and yet he is not unhappy, because he wears the pearl of content and his thoughts of future bliss are as an ornament about his neck. Men who have their breasts made brilliant with stars and gems might well envy those whose jewels flash within their bosoms and light up the secret chambers of their souls. Thoughts have more to do with true wealth than all the miser’s stores. The soul makes the estate. He is a poor man who ranks with emperors and yet is a stranger to inward peace. And he is rich who has not a foot of land to call his own, whose heritage is altogether in another world, but who nevertheless can say—

*“My God, You are mine,  
What a comfort Divine,  
What a blessing to know  
That my Jesus is mine!  
In the heavenly Lamb,  
Thrice happy I am,  
And my heart, it does leap,  
At the sound of His name.”*

Thought does it all. If thoughts are full of faith in Jesus, confidence in the great Father, hope of Heaven and love to his follow men, the man has a young Heaven within the boundaries of his manhood! But if his thoughts are full of sadness, despondency, ambition, prim, selfishness, revenge, discontent and the like, the man is and must be unhappy—he creates his own Hell and is his own tormentor. We must, then, look well to our thoughts and keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. We must watch thought, think upon thought and pray about thought—and happy shall we be if we can say, in the language of the text—“In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.”

Now, as I may be helped to do it, I shall this morning first speak upon the Psalmist’s declarations, setting it out in some of the different lights in which he intended it to be seen. And, secondly, I shall dwell for a little upon the subject in this declaration upon which he lays the greatest stress, “Your comforts delight my soul.”

I. First, then, let us look at THE PSALMIST’S DECLARATION. We shall set it forth under five aspects. The first will be this—May we not, without twisting the text, understand David to mean that when passing many subjects in review before him, he selected the joys of true religion, or the comforts of God as the subjects which he preferred beyond all others?

The poet-king sees marching before him in procession a thousand themes for thought, many of them exceedingly attractive and fascinating. And after looking at them all with the fixed eyes of contemplation, he says, ‘‘Notwithstanding the multitude of all these subjects for thought, none of them charm me like the testimonies of my God: they afford me pleasure for awhile, but my deepest pleasure, that which delights my very soul, is found in the comforts of God.” It is worthy of note that David was a man whose contemplations could take a wide range because his experience had been a singularly varied one. He knew the joys of quiet meditation, for in his early youth he had been a shepherd’s boy and had kept his father’s flock. There are some who fancy that if happiness is to be found on earth, it may be discovered in rural scenes—in quietude and peace—and I am inclined to think that they are not far off the mark. To the mind which is rightly attuned, there are sacred charms in solitude.

Well might our poet praise God for quiet and sing—  
*“The calm retreat, the silent shade,  
With prayer and praise agree,  
And seem by Your kind bounty made  
For those that worship You.”*

In the quietude in which he fed his flocks, David had not been a soulless clown, but a poet, a student, a Divine. At midnight he surveyed the heavens and gave us that wonderful eighth Psalm in which he says, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him; and the son of man that You visit him?” He had considered objects upon earth as well as those in the skies. Many Psalms will show that he was a careful observer of all the works of God’s hands. He loved to ramble where he startled the hind of the morning and glanced at the eagle renewing his youth. He delighted to sit down by the brooks which ran among the hills, to watch the wild goats and the conies and listen to the birds which sang among the branches of the trees.

He noted the fir trees where the storks have their nests and the cedars of Lebanon so full of sap. He knew the joys of observing the works of God’s hands and they are by no means small. If we all observed Nature more it would be well for us. An eminent physician of the insane has said that he

has never met with an insane naturalist. The observation of the works of God in the animal and vegetable kingdoms is so amusing and entertaining to the mind that it affords relaxation from the severer studies and ruder cares of life. David knew something of natural history and something of astronomy. Indeed, he knew something of every natural science and, besides, he was acquainted with the charms of music and the delights of poetry, for he was, himself, a poet of transcendent genius.

I think of all purely intellectual joys, there is none greater than to be able to pour fourth sublime truths in fitting words. Surely if the new-born child gives pleasure to its mother, the new-born poem gives even more rapturous joy to its author—“this is my own thought; it has sprung from my own soul.” The author feels a fuller joy in every stanza than the reader is ever likely to do, for who admires the child one-half so much as does the parent? And then to wed an immortal hymn to celestial music, as David often did, is not this delight? To sit beneath some spreading oak and there, with skillful fingers, wake the harp to ecstasy and sing, “My hands shall find You, O my God, and every string shall have its tribute to sing”—is not this pleasure?

David knew, beyond all others of his times, the united charms of the Divine arts of poetry and music. Yet in looking back, the royal Psalmist exclaims, “In the multitude of all these charming subjects, rich beyond all price, You, my God, even You, are the chief of my delights and the comforts You have revealed to me and applied, by Your Spirit, to my heart— these are the summit of my joy! In all the rest I may take a measured solace, but Your comforts fill my heart to the brim. They not only sustain and cheer me, but they delight my soul.” Remember, Beloved Friends, that David not only knew the joys of retirement, but he had felt the delights of active life and they are not few to a man who is in vigorous health and mental force.

There is rapture in being able to serve one’s country by noble deeds. When the cowards were flying before Goliath, it was no small joy for the stripling of Bethlehem to come to the front to do battle for his country in heroic fashion. It is no mean thing to be stirred by—

*“That stern joy which warriors feel  
In firemen worthy of their steel.”*  
When he came back with the grizzly head of the champion in his hand, it was no trifling joy that flushed the young warrior’s bosom. He had slain the enemy of his country and now would the daughters of Israel rejoice in the dance and say—“Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten

thousands.” He knew the joys of battle and of victory!

Moreover, the Psalmist knew the splendors of a court and the glory of a throne, for he was the chosen king of Israel. He was an absolute monarch of a people glad to serve him. He knew the pleasures of power and the sweets of eminence. David’s history was the epitome of all human experience. It was not so much one life as all our lives condensed in one. “He seemed to be not one but all mankind’s epitome.” That Book of Psalms—to which of us does it not belong? Is there not a portion there for each man among us? Whereas we each have had a separate way, David appears, like his greater Lord, to have trodden all our ways and to have known the sorrows and the happiness of us all.

Yet, reviewing all his thoughts, he says, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, of all I have suffered, and all I have enjoyed; all I have gained, and all I have lost, all I have desired, and all I have attained, the delight of my soul is in my God, and in nothing else; Your comforts, O my God, delight my soul.” I feel sure that we are not going away from David’s words and certainly not from David’s sense, if we give this meaning to the text.

Now I say to every Christian here, should not this be your assertion, that although all desirable things should pass before you in procession, yet nothing to you is like your God, nothing is comparable to His comforts? Perhaps some of you are now growing gray, having, in your time, passed through many phases of life. You were rich once, you have also been poor. You have been in company, you have been in solitude. You have been a wife. You have been a widow. You have been a child. You have been a parent. You have been a master. You have been a servant. You have been honored. You have been slandered. You have gone through most conditions of life—and now—what is your verdict? Your answer is concerning everything else except the love of Christ, “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

But concerning the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, you confess that it delights your souls as much as it did in your youth when you consecrated your first energies to God! The Gospel still delights us, now that we begin to miss the strength from the arm and the spring from the footstep! It still delights us now that gray hairs are on us and we are descending to the grave. it delights us, yes, and delights us in our last hours as much as it did in our first. Blessed be the name of the Lord for this!

But we cannot linger. A second sense of the text will now come before us. David also means that when he was exercised with many cares in life he found his solace in the comforts of his God. David had many reasons for care. Probably the first part of his life was the happiest, when he had only his sheep. Afterwards, when he was called to court, his evil days began. Then was he persecuted by Saul and hated without a cause. His cares were many when he roamed the wilderness with that rough warrior band around him, so eager for vengeance, so apt to censure their leader’s actions. Then his thoughts must have been many and perplexed. We find passages in David’s life full of bewildering trouble, like the scene at Ziklag when the city was burned with fire and all his property and the possessions of his followers was taken away, and their wives and children, too.

The rough soldiers, in the bitterness of their spirits, spoke of stoning David, and David was much distressed. His own dear ones were missing and thus he had to bear his own share in the common calamity, and the blame of all his followers besides. At that time, “David encouraged himself in his God.” He does not appear to have talked to Joab and Abishai about it, but his heart went away to his God so that in the multitude of his cares his resort was to the Lord. After he assumed the throne, David’s cares multiplied. The care of the Church of God, as well as of the State, was upon him. His own sins also multiplied his cares, for when he had transgressed against his God, his family became to him a constant source of distress and even to the last he had to say, “My house is not so with God.”

He had cares heavier than yours or mine, because we are not kings and have neither armies at home, nor foes abroad to look after. However much we may have to think of, we can scarcely claim to be quite so burdened as David must have been. And I thank God we have not such rebellious children to deal with as David found in Amnon, Absalom and the rest. What, then, did David do when he was beset with thoughts of trouble and distress? He went always to the Lord and delighted in the comforts of his God!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, this age is an age of care. We live too fast by half. We do too much and accomplish, therefore, too little. Our good sires could afford time for lengthened family devotions of a character which seem impossible to us. They could listen to sermons which would altogether tire us and snap the bands of our patience because their minds were of a more solid order and their lives were vexed with fewer cares. We are all hack and hurry. We ride the whirlwind—we are scarcely satisfied with the speed of lightning! Today Christian people cannot rush at this pace without serious injury to themselves unless they often refresh themselves with the comforts of God.

Sunday is the great safeguard for the sanity of merchants and business men—and those who break the Sabbath to bring business cares into the one day in seven act a suicidal part. If more often, in the other six days, Christian men would get alone with God, pour out their hearts before Him, tell Him their cares and unveil to Him their souls, they would have more ease of mind, be more strong for the struggle of life and less likely to fail through an over-worked brain. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.”

Londoners, in olden times, went into the fields on May Day morning to bathe their faces in the dew, for they thought it made them fair. I would that every morning we bathed our faces in the dew of Heaven, so should we be comelier to look upon when mingling with men in the business of the day. If every night before we went to sleep we dipped our foot in the ocean of Divine love, our sleep would be more sweet to us and care would not corrode and eat into the heart and even into the bodily constitution, as I fear it does in a great number of cases in this weary age. Get away to your God, O Christian! You see the rooks by day flying over the fields, searching for food—but as the sun goes down they congregate around their nests and offer their evening hymn together among the treetops. Beloved, let us fly away to our God, when the cares of the day are over, and praise and magnify His name! And then let us nestle down beneath the shadow of His wings.

A third meaning of the text is this—when oppressed with evil thoughts the Psalmist found his shelter in God. I may be speaking upon a subject which will be novel to some here, but it is one in which others of you have had too much experience. There are times when the thoughts within us are terrible and horrible. If all the thoughts of the most chaste and holy here could now be unveiled to all, a life-enduring blush would crimson every cheek. Some evil thoughts arise from our own depraved hearts and these are bad enough. Others are excited by the unholy world around us and these are equally as evil. But there are some of still darker form which are not thoughts of ours at all, but which are injected into the soul by Satan.

How horrible they are and how desperate is the conflict of a gracious soul when it is tortured with them! Satan will make you think that there is no God, no Savior, no Holy Spirit. There is not a doctrine of the Gospel which he will not tempt you to doubt! There is not a holy thing which he will not urge you to blaspheme. I know some who have been forced to put their hands to their mouths for fear they should utter the accursed thoughts which have rushed through their minds. Do you suppose that these were drunks and swearers? No, I am not speaking of such! I am speaking of the purest and most holy men and women it was ever my lot to know, who have, nevertheless, been tormented by the devil with the most hideous and horrible suggestions with regard to the things of God. If you have never felt this temptation I hope you never may, but the probabilities are you will, for there is scarcely a child in God’s family that the dog of Hell has not barked at. I have known such seasons, have known them to my horror.

Now in such times, when obscene, profane and blasphemous thoughts swarm in the brain like so many flies, as though Beelzebub, the god of flies, had taken possession of the whole mind and made it swarm with every filthy thing—at such times the only consolation is to fall back upon your God. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, when they fret and wear me, like moths, or rather tear and rend me like wolves, I will fly to You, my God, to the splendor of Your love, to that Fountain filled with blood which washes even these sins away and to the mighty Spirit whose strong hands can chase these evil ones far away and give peace to my spirit. Your comforts shall lift me right away from all this tempestuous weather into the clear sky of communion wherein Your comforts shall delight my soul.

Let me give a fourth rendering, upon which I will be very brief. When the mind is worried with thoughts which cannot be dissipated, it is well to turn unto the Lord. Thoughtful men will have periods in which they do not seem so much to have a subject for thought as to be prisoners of war to 10,000 subjects at once. They are carried away as with a flood. Their thoughts leap over one another. They press and struggle like a raging mob. They surge like the billows of the sea. They overflow the brain as though some mountain torrent had burst its banks and rushed down with devastating force into the valleys beneath. There are riots of thoughts— not one is well formed—or if well formed, it jostles its neighbor and is jostled in return. The motions of the mind are at such times quick, hurried, impetuous—as though a whole lifetime of thought could be lived through in a few minutes.

Have you ever been borne away by thoughts which you long to be rid of? Have you not put your hand to your weary brain and wished it would leave off thinking? Have you not envied the country boy who swings upon a gate, scares the birds, eats bacon and is as happy as a king? Have you never wished you could turn into a flower and shut yourself up for the night as a flower does? O those nights of weary watching and longing for rest that will not come! Now there is no sleeping nectar that I know of like contemplation of the love of God! I know nothing which can give the jaded spirit rest like drawing near to God.

When God smites me with pain I love to tell Him, “O God, I would not smite a child of mine like this. If I did, if there were some necessity for it, I should pity him. My heart would yearn over him. I could not be untender to my dear boy. And I am Your child and You are a better Father than I am—why, then, do you strike me?” Lay hold of the Lord. No, Brothers and Sisters, in His relationship of Father lay hold upon His heart! Draw near to Him and wrestle with Him in this way, and pain will often give way before your pleading, and trouble of heart will fly when you thus come to close grips with the Covenant Angel and rise to really child-like, believing dealings with your Father which is in Heaven. If you know the Law of mental storms you may reach peace, and that Law may be summed up in one line—Steer to God right away. Fly to Him and you will find a peaceful shelter where—

*“You shall smile at Satan’s rage,  
And face a frowning world.”*

The last meaning I shall give the text is this—that if ever we are beset by a multitude of thoughts of a doubting kind, we shall find our best solace in flying to our God. Do you ever fall into this state? Do you thus speak—“No doubt there is a Savior, and a Savior for sinners, but is there a Savior for me? He can forgive sins, but will He forgive mine? He is able to renew the heart, but has He renewed mine? May I not prove, after all, to be a hypocrite? Is not my experience imaginary? Is not my faith presumption? May I not be self-deceived? Can I hope to hold out to the end? Shall I not, after all, fall by the hand of the tempter? Above all what shall I do when I come to die—will not the waves of death overflow me? Will not its chill floods swallow me up? What shall I do in the world to come if God forsakes me? Alas, may He not have forsaken me already?

“My present circumstances are grievous, may I not expect to be deserted in my future distresses, and if so, what shipwreck shall I make and what a byword will my character be? Will He not leave me to my own devices because I have, in former times, been so worldly and unholy? Alas, if He does, shall I become like others, who were at their outset flaming professors and ended in being apostates from the Lord?” Now, my Brothers and Sisters, whenever such thoughts assault your soul, remember David’s declaration—“In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.” Come and anchor close by your God and the storms of unbelief will no more affect you.

Francis Quarles, in his quaint, “Emblems,” represents a man with a flail who is dealing heavy blows all round. And the only one who escapes is a person who, with much daring, comes close to him. The way to escape the heavy blows of Providence is to close in with Him who wields the rod, for the further off the heavier is the blow! In all dark times run home! Return unto your rest. If you cannot come to the Lord as a saint, come as a sinner! If the past should have been altogether a delusion, yet begin again! Do not discuss with Satan the question as to whether you are a saint or not, but fly to Christ Jesus! Cease all your questions about whether or not you are saved, and say—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I’ll fall.  
He’ll be my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All.”*

Thus will you quickly end a fray and begin a feast, for God’s comforts will delight your soul.

II. We will spend a few minutes on the second point, which is this— WHAT IS THIS SUBJECT UPON WHICH DAVID LAYS SUCH STRESS? He says, “Your comforts delight my soul.” What are God’s comforts? They are very many—they are certainly as many as the multitudes of our thoughts. And they are very weighty—they are certainly as weighty as our thoughts can be, so that the one may be set over against the other. The comforts of God are those refreshing Truths which surround the Person and the offices of the blessed Three in One.

First there is the Father, Oh, is there no comfort in the thought that He is our Father, and not a stranger? Not a taskmaster, as some like to call Him, but our Father, and “like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Can I be His child and will He take delight in my misery? He may chasten me for my sins, but will He always chide, will He keep His anger forever? If He is, indeed, a Father and the best of fathers, my Soul why are you cast down, why are you disquieted in me? Hope in His eternal love, for He will yet comfort you and be the light of your countenance.

Then comes Jesus, Jesus the Son of God. What comforts there are in Him! A Man, of the substance of His mother, suffering just as we suffer and touched, therefore, with a feeling of our infirmities, with a heart that always beats true to us. Jesus, God as well as Man, and therefore able to succor. Is not that case well-cared for which is in His hands? Is not a soul safe when it is under His protection? Look up, you troubled heart, into the eyes of Jesus, and see if they are not as stars to chase away the midnight of your spirit! Look at the crown of thorns of Jesus and see if it does not pluck the thorns out of your spirit! Behold Him suffering for you as Son of Man and Son of God and find your richest consolation there.

Does my sin trouble me? It was laid on Jesus, why should it trouble me? Does God’s wrath distress me? It has spent itself on Jesus, how can it fall on me? Where are fears about the future? Is it not written, “Because I live, you shall live also”? Can we be burdened by fears of death? Jesus Himself has died, perfumed the grave in which we shall sleep and then removed its door so that none shall be imprisoned there. Shall we be dismayed concerning the Judgment? “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that has risen again.” What room is there for distress of mind if we think upon the Person and the work of Jesus Christ?

Nor let us forget the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has already regenerated us and, in some degree, sanctified, illuminated and comforted us. And He at this time “helps our infirmities.” Shall we not in all times of our distress think of Him? What if I cannot pray? He “makes intercession in the saints.” What if I cannot feel? He can quicken me. What if I feel utterly dead to Divine things in my own apprehension? Cannot He make me like the chariots of Amminadib and that, too, in a single moment? Has He not coals of fire with which to kindle on the cold altar of my spirit another flame such as burned there in the day of my espousals? O blessed Spirit, You can do everything! Deal graciously with me.

Thus from the Father, Son, and Spirit we obtain fullness of comfort. But these consolations also spring from the whole work and system of Divine Grace. Old Christians, as a rule, become more and more Calvinistic because they need more comfort. And having had more experience, they have an appetite for the more solid and soul-satisfying Doctrines of Grace which they were strangers to in their youth. The idea that we are to preserve ourselves and that our salvation hinges upon our own future endeavors may be very pleasant for a summer-weather sailor—but for navigating the wintry seas we need something more cheering.

The idea that we have not an Immutable God to deal with may be put up with when the birds are singing in the sun, but it will not be tolerated when the owls are hooting in the night! A tried Believer must have an Immutable God or he will feel his case to be hopeless. At this moment my richest comforts are summed up in the verse—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

That whole system begins in Divine Grace, goes on in Grace and ends in Grace. That system makes the creature nothing and the Creator everything! That system says to self-righteousness, “Begone, for if you remain here men will boast.” But that system says to Divine Grace, “Come in and dwell with guilty, worthless, helpless sinners and save them from first to last, that Christ may wear the crown”—that entire system is my consolation. In times of spiritual gloom I cling more tenaciously than ever to the old faith of my fathers, the faith which I have taught you from the beginning—that salvation is of the Lord, not of man, neither by man, but is the entire and sole work of God. I am a lost man if it is not so! If there is anything for me to do to complete the Savior’s work, I shall never accomplish it! And if the Grace of God is not effectual to save the very worst of men, then where God’s face is seen in splendor I shall never come. Salvation is all of Grace, rich Grace, triumphant Grace, and therefore it delights my soul.

Again, in times when many thoughts assail us, the attributes of God are, each one of them, the delight of our soul if we are enabled to see them aright, though, alas, Satan too often makes us see them in a wrong light and tempts us to extract sorrow instead of joy from them. Is God Omniscient? Then my heavenly Father knows what things I have need of before I ask Him. Is God Omnipotent? Then He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to Him. Is God Immutable? Then from His purpose He will never turn, but will certainly perform the work of Grace. There is light in every Divine attribute for the Believer.

God is Love! Oh, what a jewel that sentence is! What a mountain of light! God is Love! Child of sorrow, sing of that God and let your sorrows flee! God is Love, Infinite, Immutable, Omnipotent, Eternal Love! Love even to you—rejoice in it! It is also most comforting to remember that God is just, for He is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love. He is not unrighteous to forget His promises or break the bonds of the Covenant, frustrate His oath and discard the many solemn engagements under which He has laid Himself to His only Son. Furthermore, dear Friends, at such times the promises of God are still before us—and what a field of comforts to delight the soul one has opening up before him!

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” “Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help you, says the Lord.” “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed says the Lord that has mercy on you.” “For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather you.” “I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands.” “Your shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your days, so shall your strength be.” “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.”

“I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” “My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” “Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”? “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” “He will keep the feet of His saints.” “The righteous, also, shall hold on His way, and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk upright.”

But, oh, if I had a thousand mouths, I could not repeat and dwell upon a thousandth part of the promises as they should be dwelt upon! This Bible is a great honeycomb and it drips with honey. Come and taste its virgin sweetness, O you whose mouths are full of bitterness, and the next time the multitude of your thoughts shall make your mouth taste of gall and wormwood, come to these comforts of the Lord, for they shall delight your soul. It is worth while to taste the bitters that the sweets may be the sweeter. Thank God for winters—we should not value summers half so much without them! Blessed be God there are nights as well as days, or we might grow weary of the sun himself. Blessed be God for trouble, for depression of spirit, for adversity, for waves and billows to go over us one after another, for here in the midst of all these, His comforts delight our soul!

The gist of the whole matter is this—the way to comfort is the way where God is to be found. Christian, the way for sustenance, strength, hope and consolation is the way which leads you to your God. Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. And oh, poor Sinner, the same way is open to you! Do not look within for comfort, for you will find none. As well go to the Arctic regions and pierce icebergs to discover warmth, as look to yourselves for consolation. Away, away, away, away from your own thoughts to God’s thoughts! Away from your own judging and weighing, and computations, and speculations, and expectations to the firm promises of a God that cannot lie, who has said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out,” and, “Whoever believes in Christ Jesus is not condemned.”

Come and throw yourself at the foot of the Cross though you are the blackest sinner out of Hell! You who are half-damned already in your own apprehension, come where the bleeding hands are streaming priceless blood and put your confidence in the propitiation God Himself has provided for such as you are! You can never perish if you will come there, and in the multitude of your thoughts within you the comforts of Jesus shall delight your soul. God bless you, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 94.  
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MULTITUDINOUS THOUGHTS AND SACRED COMFORTS  
NO. 883

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 1, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINTGON.

**“In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Your comforts delight my soul.” Psalm 94:19.**

IF man were a mere animal, his joy and sorrow would depend entirely upon outward things. Let but the trough be full and the swine are happy. Let the pasture be abundant and the sheep are content. In the sunshine every sparrow will be twittering on the trees. Let the heavens weep and every wing is drooping. In long drought, or severe frost, or pinching famine the animal creation languishes and pines. You cannot, however, be sure of making a man happy by surrounding him with abundance, nor can you plunge a Christian man into wretchedness by any deprivations which you may cause him. Man’s greatest joy or sorrow must arise from inner springs.

The mind itself is the lair of misery or the nest of happiness. Thoughts are the flowers from which we must distil the essential flavorings of life. Paul and Silas sing in the stocks because their minds are at ease, while Herod frets on his throne because conscience makes him a coward. The soul of Linmeus exults within him at the sight of a common all golden with blooming shrubs, while many a millionaire has roamed amid his gardens and conservatories and found no joy amid them. A crust of bread from one heart brings a song, from another a thousand acres of ripening grain can produce no thanksgiving.

Alexander, according to the old classic tale, sits down to weep over a conquered world, while many a peasant who has not a foot of ground to call his own rejoices in tribulation and glories in reproach. Our weal or woe is the outgrowth of seeds germinating within, not of branches which from without run over the wall. Happiness lies not in the outward, but in the inward. The fairest garden is that whose walks and arbors are in the secret of the soul—the richest and most mellow fruits are not plucked from the trees of the orchard, but are ripened within the spirit. Hence the importance of our guarding well our thoughts.

But this is the labor and difficulty, for thoughts are unstable things, unruly as the wild horses of the plains, fickle as the waves of the sea, swift as the swallow’s wings, impetuous as the hurricane, changeable as the clouds of Heaven. How are we to rule them? Sometimes they descend in clouds like the locusts, each one eager to devour our peace. They roar as the evening wolves—they howl like hungry dogs. Alas, poor boat, tossed to and fro by forces so subtle, variable and ungovernable—what shall be done for you? Hearken, for the text softly tells us that for the tempesttossed mind there is a haven of rest, an anchorage where the weakest may find shelter from the storm!

Even when multitudes of thoughts are let loose and the soul is seething and raging like a tempestuous sea, there is rest to be had—peace and quiet are yet reserved for the chosen of the Lord. The verse before us is most instructive, indicating as it does, an oasis for desert travelers, a sunny island for weary voyagers. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Your comforts delight my soul.”

Our first meditation, this morning, will be concerning multitudinous thoughts and sacred comforts. We shall afterwards pass on, more briefly, to take a nearer view of these Divine consolations. And we shall conclude by making a contrast from the text concerning those men who neither experience the multitudes of thoughts nor the comforts from on high.

I. MULTITUDINOUS THOUGHTS AND SACRED COMFORTS. This passage may be interpreted several ways. The most natural would be, I think, to refer it to thoughts tumultuous in the night of trial. There are occasions when we are grievously tried with troubles of an unusual order—and then it often happens that the floodgates of our judgment are drawn up and our liberated thoughts, in a raging torrent, without order, rush upon us foaming and threatening.

These thoughts will follow each other like gusts of an angry tempest. They may be such as these—the trouble itself, how severe it is, how it cuts one to the quick! Ten thousand other trials might have happened, any of which we fancy we could have borne more patiently, but this affliction is the direst of all, the fiercest lion of the woods. Will it be possible to escape from such a terrible calamity? Close upon the heels of this consideration will come the thought that the trial will be too much for you—that you will never be able to bear it—that your patience will give way and your faith will cast away her confidence and give place to despair.

Immediately in the rear of this another suggestion will lift its black head—this trouble is the consequence of past sin—you have walked contrary to God and He is now walking contrary to you. You would never have been made to smart thus if there had not been some gross disobedience of which you have not thoroughly repented—which God has still upon His mind—and therefore does He make you the target for His arrows. Then, like a serpent of the pit, there will dart upward the hissing and devilish suggestion—God is now giving you up! He has been merciful up to this moment, but this peculiar trial, so severe, so long continued, so piercing and penetrating, touching you in your most tender part—this is the turning point in your history.

From this day forward everything will go hard with you, you think—all circumstances will be black and cloudy. You shall know no comfort and no rest, for God has forsaken you. Your enemies will persecute and take you and you yourself will be cast out like savorless salt. “Ah,” says one, “such thoughts as these ought not to arise in any godly mind!” I know they ought not, but there they are and I question whether any child of God can affirm that he has been always altogether free from such conceptions in dark and tempestuous hours. Faith ought to shut the gate against every suggestion that would dishonor the veracity and loving kindness of God, but unfortunately the watchman sleeps and is troubled with weakness and then the enemy comes in like a flood! Happy is he who in such a moment shall be able, by the Spirit of the Lord, to lift up a standard against him!

The thoughts that I have just uttered are only specimens of what will occur when the child of God is in the furnace and under a cloud. Of course these thoughts will be different in every case, but they will rush, as I have already said, like a raging torrent, sweeping everything before it in headlong fury. Now, at such times it is a great blessing if God’s comforts are our stay and holdfast, delighting our souls. Happy is he who has found out a heavenly breakwater against the floods of great waters, a store of consolations for the most imminent emergencies. To these consolations may you be led by the Holy Spirit.

For a practical list of them I would refer you to the Psalm which lies open before us. You will observe that David derived comfort in his afflicted condition from the belief that God knew everything that he was suffering— “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” (Psa. 94:9). “Ah,” says the soul, “whatever this trial may be, one thing is clear, my heavenly Father knows all about it. There is not a circumstance in my present condition which is hidden from Him. That eye which has watched me from my childhood is not closed towards me in this dark hour. He understands and knows the way that I take, and if I am surrounded with the thick darkness, it is no darkness to Him—

*“Even the hour that darkest seems  
Will His changeless goodness prove.  
From the mist His brightness streams,  
God is wisdom, God is love.”*

“You God see me.” “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” That is no mean consolation in the golden words which fell from the Savior’s lips—“Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.” The sevenfold heat of the furnace cools when we know that the Lord is there, “a very present help in trouble.” Next to this, the Psalmist was comforted by the belief that chastisement is blessed to the partaker of it. Note the 12th verse—“Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord.” “Then,” says the soul, “if it is not prosperity which is set forth as a mark of blessedness. If it is adversity which is the Covenant spot and the choice mark of a favored child of God, then will I congratulate myself in being made to smart beneath my gracious Father’s hand.”

Everything as to our state of mind depends upon the light in which we regard the dealings of Providence. If our trouble comes to us as a curse. If, indeed, our afflictions are the first drops of that tremendous sheet of fire which will fall upon us forever from an angry God, then trial is, indeed, an awful thing. But if it is so, that out of love to us we are made to undergo the necessary processes of tribulation—to prepare us like winnowed wheat for the peaceful garner—then we will accept our sufferings with joy! Welcome, O Grief, if you are a black messenger loaded with treasure! Welcome, thrice! Welcome to my patient spirit, O rod of the Covenant, soulenriching and sanctifying! Here, Beloved, is a second consolation which revives the fainting soul when ready to swoon amid the heat and burden of oppressive thoughts.

The Psalmist goes on to declare that all adversity will have a happy end, “Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it.” Then says the Spirit, “Though I may be cast down today and sorely vexed. And though the wicked may be at ease and spread themselves like green bay trees, yet there is an end appointed when the axe shall be for the root of the ungodly and when the Glory shall be for the afflicted and poor saints.” A sight of the end makes us to judge rightly of the whole matter. All’s well that

 ends well. If the cup is not poison, but medicine, then its bitterness shall be sweetness to me. If the plowing is not for a sowing of salt beneath the curse of desolation, but for a seedtime of Grace with a harvest of bliss, then plow on, O Lord, and though the furrows tear my soul, yet be it so, the end makes amends and therefore Your will be done!

The Psalmist still further, in the midst of his troubles, kept himself in the belief of God’s faithfulness. I called your attention in the exposition to the strong utterance of the 14th verse—“For the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance.” If we could believe it possible that God might suffer His chosen children to perish and that those who trust in Him might, under certain circumstances be confounded, we might very well wrap our faces in sackcloth and go our way in wretchedness, like the slaves of despair. But the Lord never has utterly deserted one of His servants yet and He never will!

When all His waves and His billows went over David, yet the Lord commended His loving kindness in the daytime and gave His servant a song in the night, for God was the health of his countenance and his God forever and ever. The Lord has made His servants to endure trials great and many—they have gone through fire and through water—but in every case the delivering arm has been made bare, and in their extremity the opportunity of love has certainly arrived. Rejoice then, O you who are vexed with multitudes of troublous thoughts, and let the Infallible faithfulness of your God delight your souls!

Once more in that Psalm, David dwells upon his own past experience— “Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, my foot slips, Your mercy, O Lord, held me up.” How often have you and I found it to be one of the shortest ways to renew our hope, when we have called to mind the former days and the years of past mercy! We have said, “Was He not with me on the field of strife, to deliver me from the tumult of the people? Did I not obtain mercy from Him when I was brought very low? Did I not find safety beneath the shadow of His wings when the storm of the terrible ones assailed me? He that has enabled me to erect so many Ebenezers in days past has not helped me thus far to put me to shame at the end—He has not revealed all this loving kindness and Truth to me that He, after all, may make me ashamed of my hope.”

We have not to deal with a changeable God. Oh, no! He assuredly will complete the work which His wisdom has begun. All His power shall be put forth to finish the work of Divine Grace. Such thoughts as these, in the times when our heart is much distracted, will be found to minister not merely consolation, but a deep, profound quiet and even a holy exhilaration amounting, as our text has it, to “delight.” “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Your comforts delight my soul.”

Brothers and Sisters, I have thus spoken upon the text as referring to tumultuous thoughts in the night of trial. Permit me to remind you that it will be equally right to refer it to perplexing thoughts and periods of dilemma. The path of life to some men is remarkably straightforward—from their circumstances and surroundings they are very seldom at a loss to know the path of duty. But with many others the narrow way is, to all appearances, exceedingly like the track of the children of Israel through the wilderness—in and out, backward and forward—“progressive, retrograde, and standing still.” Oftentimes have we come to a turning in the road where human wisdom is at a nonplus to know whether to select the right hand or the left. Two ways may appear equally right morally, but yet the choice of either of them may involve the most solemn consequences as to our future.

I suppose that almost every Christian man has had to look about him for signposts and at times he has found none. He has felt like a traveler in the trackless bush of Australia and he has been obliged to go down on his knees and cry to God that he may hear a voice behind him saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” I may be addressing some of you today who are perplexed with a multitude of conflicting thoughts as to your course in life. You do not know what to do. A certain plan has suggested itself and for a time it has seemed the very best course for you—but just now your mind wavers, for another course presents itself—and there is much to say in its favor. You are bewildered. You cannot see the clue of Providence. You are lost as in a maze.

Indeed, at this moment you are much dispirited for you have tried various ways and methods to escape from your present difficulty, but you have been disappointed where you expected relief and probably that which you are about to attempt will end in disappointment, too. Your thoughts compass you about like bees, or as the flies of Egypt’s plague, they worry, but do not help you. You are distracted and your thoughts have no order about them, for while they lean one way at this moment, they drag you in the opposite direction the next second. The currents meet and twist you as in a whirlpool.

Now, my dear perplexed Friend, at such a time your plight may remind you of the children of Israel at the Red Sea, with the sea before them and the rocks on either hand—and the cruel Egyptians in the rear—and you must imitate their action and “stand still and see the salvation of God.” But, you reply, “I cannel be quiet, I am too agitated.” Brother, let patience have her perfect work. In quietness shall be your strength. Yet you reply, “My spirit is restless and impetuous. I wish I could be calm, for then I could better judge my position and probably discover the way of escape. But I am perturbed, perplexed, tossed up and down, distracted. Alas, what shall I do?”

Listen, then, to the text, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.” Turn your eyes to those deep things of God which have a Divine power to allay the torment of your spirit. Cease from a too anxious consideration of the things which are seen and temporal, and gaze by faith upon the things which are unseen and eternal. Remember that your way is ordered by a higher power than your will and choice. The eternal destiny of God has fixed your every footstep. Believe that wisdom, not blind fate, but wisdom, has ordained the bounds of your habitation and fixed your position and your condition so definitely that no fretfulness of yours can change it for the better. In the ordinance of God, all your history is fixed so as to secure His Glory and your soul’s profit.

Your present sorrow is the bitter bud of greater joy!  
Your transient loss secures your ultimate and never-ceasing gain. How I rejoice to believe that the Lord shall choose my inheritance for me! All things are fixed by a Father’s hand, by no arbitrary and stern decree, but by His wise counsel and tender wisdom. He who loved us from before the foundations of the world has immutably determined all the steps of our pilgrimage. Why, then, disturb yourself? There is a hand upon the helm which shall steer your vessel safely enough between the rocks and by the quicksand—away from the shoals and the headlands, through the mist and through the darkness—safely to the desired haven! Our Pilot never sleeps and His hand never relaxes its grasp. It is a blessed thing, after you have been muddling and meddling as you ought not to do with the affairs of Providence, to leave them alone and cast your burden upon the Lord.  
Oftentimes in my own short career in connection with this Church and with the many works of God committed to my charge, I have been brought to a nonplus. I have considered and judged and been perplexed—and then discovering my gross folly, encumbering myself with much serving—I have, at last, by His Grace—resolved to lay my care upon the shelf and I have said unto the Lord, “I will never fret about this matter again. You shall judge and work for Your poor servant.” Brethren, hear my testimony! Things have always gone right with me when I have been brought to this! Whereas they have been wrong enough when I have befogged myself with care and have wondered how the College and the Orphanage could be provided for and 50,000 other things! When I have left all with my Lord, HE has brought forth my righteousness as the light, and my judgment as the noonday. I charge you, therefore, children of God in dilemma, roll your burdens upon God and He will sustain you and give you to rejoice in beholding His wisdom and His love.  
The text will endure no straining if we read it as declaring that when thoughts remorseful pass over us in the hour of recollection, we may find peace in the comforts of God. Thoughts remorseful, I say—and what man among you could look back steadily and undismayed upon the whole course of his life? Take away the Cross and no Christian man dare recall the past to his memory. Each individual hair might stand on end with horror at the remembrance of the ruin into which our past iniquity has plunged us! Memory does well, beneath the shadow of the Atonement, to turn over each leaf of her diary. There are the sins of one’s youth and the sins of mature years. There are sins of ignorance and sins against light and knowledge—secret sins and sins before the face of the sun.  
All together, how many? Who shall count them? We have perpetrated aggravated offenses inasmuch as we have repeated sins which we professed to have repented of—sins in our case have worn a blacker hue because of circumstances which made them to stand without excuse. How frequently our evil ways have been injurious to others! At times that thought stings as does an adder, for we may have led others into sin who have not yet repented—who are going down to the Pit to reap the reward of sins into which we drew them! Alas, the recollections of the past do not end in their painfulness with our conversion since we have continued to transgress.  
Our sins of omission rise like Andes for height. Our sins of commission reach to the clouds. Sins against the Church and against the world, against our families, against ourselves—sins against the precious blood, sins against the blessed Spirit, sins against our loving Father—who shall count them? And when these sins are attentively viewed by the soul—not glanced at superficially, but looked into with hearty and honest repentance—how often will the question arise, “Can there be forgiveness for all these? Is it possible that they are blotted out? Is it not all a delusion and a dream, that such iniquity is really washed away?” And thought will follow thought, like lightning flashes in the thick of the tempest, till the soul will be broken in pieces with dismay, unless it turns to God’s comforts, which alone can delight the penitent soul.

Behold them now! There is a God of mercy, infinite mercy, and the greatest sin cannot be equal to the greatness of His power to forgive! There is a fountain filled with blood and the power of that blood is not exhausted. Jesus is a living Intercessor—“If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” The five wounds are still pleading and, though our sins are as scarlet, there stands the unwavering promise that they shall be as wool! Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as snow. Brothers and Sisters, it is of great service to the soul for us to go back frequently to our starting point. Our first penitence is one of the most lovely traits of the Christian character and ought to be always manifest—we should always be weeping for sin—but the tears should fall upon the Savior’s feet.  
We should weep because our sins are forgiven. We should rest upon Jesus as guilty sinners still in ourselves, having nothing more to rest upon today, after 20 years of walking with God, than we had at the very first—for then we had the atoning blood and we have nothing more than that at this hour as the ground of our acceptance with God. O let us keep to this—that when many bitter thoughts are stirred as to the past—we may see the living Savior presenting His atoning sacrifice before the Throne of God and may, in it, rejoice!  
The word, “delight,” has in this place in the original Hebrew the idea of dancing, and, indeed, our heart exults and leaps for joy at the sight of the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ! Bold can we stand before God when we plead the righteousness of Christ! Though our sins are many, yet none shall lay them to our charge and though they are black, yet are they forgiven and none shall dare accuse whom God absolves. Let us not further linger. There are often with us thoughts of heart-searching in seasons of spiritual anxiety—and it is a blessed thing, in the multitude of our thoughts of heart-searching—if the comforts of God can still delight our soul.  
God forbid we should ever say a word to dissuade professors from the duty of self-examination. Our salvation is too solemn a thing to be taken upon trust. No man has any right to believe that he is saved upon any assumed and taken-for-granted ground of assurance. He who is afraid to examine himself has need to be afraid—for God will examine him! He who is right is never afraid of being searched, but rather he prays, “Search me, O God and try me and know my ways.” Yet, under self-examination, thoughts like these will naturally take wing in the heart—“Am I truly born again? That conversion of mine, was it a fancy, was it a reality? Do I know what the indwelling, purifying, quickening power of the Holy Spirit is, or is my experience only imagination? Is the change within me merely a transient desire after reformation?  
“Am I still in a carnal and unrenewed state? Do I produce the fruits of righteousness? Do I live as Christians are said to live? Do I follow after holiness in the fear of God? Do I, in very truth, love Christ, or is it only a pretense? Do I heartily serve Him? Does the love of Christ actually constrain me?” Ah, Brethren, when I recollect my own daily infirmities, I must confess I cannot always answer those questions without much debate of spirit! And I suspect that the most of you, in the matter of solemn heartquestioning, do not find things going very smoothly with you, either.  
At such times, in the multitude of your thoughts within you, you will discover no delight unless you cast yourself upon the consolations which God has prepared for such a case—and I think they are these—“Well, if I never did love my Lord, if it were all a mistake, yet He still receives sinners and I will go to Him. If, after all, my religion has been a pretense, yet He has said, ‘Look unto Me and be you saved.’ My faith shall even, now, look up to the Lamb of Calvary, the Divine Savior. Jesus, I am guilty, but oh, I trust You.” I know there is no consolation like this! Never mind your experience—in hours of doubt leave it and fly at once to Jesus! If the devil calls your profession a lie, let him do so. But remember there is no lie in that Sacrifice that makes reconciliation for sin between the Believer and his God—and to that blessed Sacrifice—all guilty and undone as we are, let us fly at once!  
These consolations will yet delight your soul if you push them farther. Having looked to the precious blood, then read your adoption in Christ, your union to Christ, your interest in the Covenant through Christ, your personal security by virtue of union to Christ! Get once to the Cross and you have reached the wellhead of consolations. We must not tarry there, however, but further observe that sometimes we have multitudes of thoughts of foreboding in days of depression. These dark prophesyings are sometimes about ourselves. How many of God’s people say, “Alas I shall die in a workhouse! I do not know what will become of me in old age, when these fingers cannot earn my daily bread.”  
At other times and with some of us, much more often, we prophesy evil concerning our work—“The Holy Spirit will withdraw from our Church. Our ministry will not be useful. Our various works will fall to pieces. We shall see those who profess to be zealous go back to the world again.” Such thoughts as these haunt as. The Sunday school teacher will be afraid lest there should be no conversions in the class, or that supposed conversions will turn out to be mistakes—when you once get into the foreboding line it is very easy to be a great prophet of evil and to believe yourself when not a word of what you are saying has a smattering of truth in it.  
Then we dream dreadful things concerning our nation. According to the gloomy prophets, all England is going to bad—not England alone, but all countries are hastening on to a general and everlasting crash. Then one begins to fret about the Church of God, for, according to the soothsayers of the age, Antichrist is yet to come and new heresies are to spring up! The dogs of war are to be let loose, the Pope is to rule and burn us and one hardly knows what else! Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation have been made, sometimes, to minister poison to every bright hope! But, Brothers and Sisters, here is our comfort with regard to the future—  
*“He everywhere has sway,  
And all things serve His might.  
His every act pure blessing is,  
His path unsullied light.”*  
Let the worst come to the worst, the best will come of it before long. “If the heavens were a bow,” says one, “and the earth were the string and God should fit the arrows of His vengeance and shoot at the sons of men, yet they could find shelter with the Archer Himself.” Our refuge is in God! Let the worst calamities occur to the world in years to come, we are secure. It must be well—it cannot be ill. “Jehovah-Jireh.” Lift high the banner and hopefully advance to the battle, for the victory shall surely come unto the eternal arm, the immutable will!  
Once more. Occasionally we have profound thoughts in times of meditation—and whenever we enter into profound considerations it is well for us to know the comforts which will delight our souls. Certain minds are very prone to contemplations upon themes more puzzling than profitable, such as predestination and free will. We have, all of us, I suppose, picked at that Gordian knot in our time and we have been vain enough to hope to untie it. But that deed is not for us. Many and many a good hour have we wasted over that dark mystery—how far the eternal God has fixed and how far responsible man is left free. Milton pictures the very devils musing upon that metaphysical problem, and doubtless the angels have pondered it, too.  
But only God’s mind shall perfectly unriddle that enigma. Whenever we are oppressed with that great mystery, it must cheer us to know comforts of God which delight our souls. Among those comforts stands the grand fact that God is righteous—that He cannot err—that there cannot possibly be anything in Sovereignty that wars with Mercy or with Justice. Believing, moreover, that whoever believes in Christ Jesus has everything on his side, we can leave the riddle solved or unsolved and feel that it is small concern to us. There are many other great mysteries in the Word of God and foolish persons utterly befog themselves with them.  
Indeed, some minds never seem to be satisfied until they reach to something which they cannot comprehend and then they are ready to give up the Bible altogether! They act like one who should come in to a feast, and after turning over all the good things, should at last find a bone with no meat upon it and should insist upon it that he would not eat a morsel until he could digest that one particular bone! How foolish of men! They will not receive what they might grasp and comprehend and might be improved by—because of some one thing that happens to be above their comprehension! I bless God for a religion which I cannot understand! If I could perfectly understand it I would not believe it to be Divine—for I should be sure it did not come from the infinite God if I could grasp it and comprehend it.  
But oh, those blessed abysses of the Truths of God beyond my depth where I am obliged to cast myself upon the Lord and swim in His love! Oh, those soul-expanding mysteries—how well they give play for faith and room for confidence in God—where the soul, having done her best to grasp and comprehend, falls back upon her God and says, “How infinite You are. What a worthless worm I am. I bow before You in adoration and trust You in affection.” “In the multitude of my thoughts within me Your comforts delight my soul.”  
Enough, then, upon our first point. I fear the multitude of my words have given you a weary sense of what a multitude of thoughts must be.  
II. I could wish that we had time to VIEW THESE SACRED COMFORTS which we have hinted at this morning. But I ask your attention very briefly to a summary. View these comforts in

 their nature. They are said to be God’s comforts. “Your comforts delight my soul,” by which I understand that they are comforts concerning God, that is, connected with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This triple well continually overflows with consolation. The more a Believer thinks of his God, the more comfort he will have.  
I understand the expression to mean also comforts prepared by God and comforts revealed by God—comforts which Divine mercy has ordained for the troubled sons of men—comforts which the Holy Spirit has revealed in the pages of Inspiration. I understand, however, more than this. The comforts that make us glad amid distractions are such as are applied by God Himself. This text has been read, and I believe rightly, by putting in a stop in a different place from that in which I have put it in my reading. “In the multitude of my thoughts, within me, Your comforts delight my soul.” For only when the comforts of God get within us do they become effectual comforts to us.  
Man may pour the richest balm into the ears in words, but only the Holy Spirit’s pouring it into the soul in very deed and truth can make the heart glad. It may be possible, also, that my text may mean, “Your comforts,” that is, the very comforts enjoyed by Jesus Christ, Himself, the Son of God. For in the multitude of our thoughts we are often brought to rejoice where Christ rejoiced—in the joy that is set before us of God’s ultimate Glory in the salvation of the chosen. We are made to drink of the cup of trembling of which Christ drank and we are also enabled to drink of the cup of rejoicing which made Him glad in the house of His pilgrimage.  
Understand, then, the comforts which God gives us to be comforts about Himself, comforts prepared and revealed by Himself, comforts applied by the Holy Spirit and comforts which have been participated in the days of His flesh by the Son of God Himself. When Archbishop Whately lay a-dying, a friend said to him, “Sir, you are great in death as well as in life. The good man shook his head and replied, “I am dying as I have lived, a simple Believer in Jesus Christ.” “But what a blessing it is,” said the other, “that your glorious intellect does not fail you at the last.” “There is nothing glorious,” said he, “but Jesus Christ.” “Still,” said the other, “your grand endurance is a great support to you.” “I have no support but faith in the crucified Savior,” said he. Comfort, you see, comes to Believers from nothing in themselves—all peace proceeds from the Lord alone.  
Observe, next, these comforts in their stability. They effectually sustain the spirit in times when they are required, for, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Your comforts delight my soul.” Many consolations are like the life-buoys we heard so much of a few weeks ago, which are exceedingly useful on dry land, but of no service whatever when once a man trusts his life to them in the sea. Even thus the world’s consolations are prized when they are not needed, but prove themselves to be something worse than ridiculous confidences when men most need their assistance.  
Once more, I must ask you to notice concerning these comforts their real efficiency. “Your comforts delight my soul.” Not my animal nature. Not my external nature, but my very self. The comforts of God penetrate to the marrow of our manhood. They feed the vital spark. They make the man, himself, most thoroughly glad. Your wine, your corn, your oil—these do but tickle the palate. Your music, your viol and your dance—these do but please the ear, the eye, the foot. But the comforts of God touch the man, himself, the essential inner core of the man’s nature. “Your comforts delight my soul.”  
Note that word, “delight.” God’s comforts not merely console, sustain and quiet my soul, but they “delight” it. And that, too, in the midst of tumultuous thoughts! Brethren, I know and speak by experience what I now say. There is a sad uneasiness in mirth and there is a matchless repose in sorrow. I have never been more deeply happy than when I have been laid low with chastening. When I have been broken in pieces all asunder, faith has found her strength in helplessness, her end of care in the end of her self-reliance. When Unbelief whispered rebelliously, “God must have His way, His cruel way,” and when the heart was reconciled to leave it there, a sweet peace reigned within.  
Yes, there is deep joy amid deep sorrow, when the spirit is hushed and quiet and the soul is even as a wearied child. May it always be your case, beloved Friends, if ever the Lord shall call you to pass through deep waters, to find the pearls that lie hidden there—to mark the light that springs up in the midnight and the joy that comes in the morning, when the weeping is over forever.  
III. Now, the last thing, with which I send you away, is A CONTRAST. Too many of our fellow men never think at all. Thinking should be the easiest thing a man could attempt, for he has not to lift his hand or move his foot, but the multitude of men will do anything, rather than think. Their thoughts, if they have any, are like a swarm of gnats, volatile, dancing up and down, light, useless! O that men would think! It is always a hopeful sign, if not of Divine Grace, yet of a prelude for the working of the Spirit of God, when men are brought to consider.  
We need not so much dread infidelity as carelessness. I had rather men would think wrongly than not think at all. When a man is awake enough to defy God, it is an awful thing—but there is something to be made of him—he is not quite asleep. There is a chance that this Goliath who defies his God may have a stone sent through his forehead and by the way of his thinking may yet be brought low. But it is people who go about their daily work and pleasure and never think at all who seem to be the devil’s peculiar portion. How few of these ever get to be converted? O for a thunderclap to make the world think! Cholera, pestilence, war, calamity—these oftentimes come from God as a voice to make men consider! But in these soft and gentle times men are lulled to false security and down to the abyss of woe the multitude are being swept.  
I cannot but compare thousands of my fellow men to the Indian whose story, which I remember to have read years ago in Whitecross’ Anecdotes. Whether the tale is true or not I cannot tell. It is said that on the great river of America there was once seen a canoe some miles off Niagara floating down the stream and as the current turned it so that those on the bank could well perceive it, they saw that the paddle was slipped and an Indian was lying in the canoe fast asleep. They shouted as best they could to awake him, for they knew well the imminent hazard of the poor wretch. They shouted and called aloud, as they ran along the bank, but it was of no use. He had either been drinking or had been so fatigued that his slumber was most profound and the canoe went floating on, continually increasing its pace.  
It dashed at last against a headland and spun round in the torrent, and they said one to another, “He is safe, the man will be awakened. Such a start as that will surely arouse him and he will paddle out of danger.” But no, he went right on till the roaring of the fall was near and then the course of the boat was so rapid that none could keep up with it and it went whirling on faster and faster. So profound was the Indian’s sleep that for awhile even the roar of the fall did not awaken him. But at last he was aroused and then he grasped his paddle—but it was too late—he was borne onward and the last that was seen of him was his standing bolt upright in the boat, as it plunged over the abyss and was never seen or heard of again.  
Ah, my fellow men, how like this are those of you who are asleep and are borne onward by the treacherous current! That fever, that sickbed— like a headland jutting into the stream—we would think it would have made you think! That frail boat of yours was twisted round and round. O that your soul had but been aroused from its slumber! The noise of Hell may well be in your ears and the sound that comes up from the abyss of terror may well arouse you. But alas, I fear you will sleep on until the cataract of destruction shall be just before you in the pangs of death and then, alas, full of horror, you shall seek escape when escape is no longer possible!  
God grant that none of us may thus sleep ourselves into a world of woe, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 94.* Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2118 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PLANTER OF THE EAR MUST HEAR  
NO. 2118

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 15, 1889.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31, 1889.

**“He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?  
He that formed the eye, shall He not see?”  
Psalm 94:9**

THE character of a man hinges upon his relation to God. You may know what manner of man he is and what are his communications, if you find out how he stands towards God. With many, God is a mere name—a word to be pronounced more or less reverently. But nothing more. He is not a force operating upon their daily lives. His Glory is no motive of action, no object of desire, no joy of their heart. “God is not in all their thoughts.” And in consequence their lives are not conformed to His holy Law. Blessed be the Most High, there are a few to whom God is everything—the First and Last, the Center and Circumference of their being.

To them the Lord is the great trust and treasure of their spirit. He is the rock of their confidence, the well-spring of their delight. Such men as they that delight in God, will seek after holiness and aim at perfection. God has shined upon them and their faces will be bright. God dwells within them, and as from a kindled lamp, light will stream forth.

Among the ungodly there are many whose lives prove that they know nothing about God. Indeed, their ignorance of God is their support in their present behavior. They comfort themselves with the notion, “The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.” To them God is out of the world as to observation or practical interference. They do not care whether He sees them or not. Their belief is that if He does see, He cares nothing what men may think or do. He is too far off to be concerned about human affairs. He will neither grow angry with the sin of the wicked, nor take pleasure in the holiness of the godly.

Of this practical atheism I am going to speak at this time, pleading against that frame of mind by the argument of the text. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” May the Holy Spirit help me in my endeavor and may all my hearers believe in the living, hearing, seeing Jehovah!

I. Our first observation will be THE NOTION THAT GOD CANNOT HEAR OR SEE IS PERNICIOUS. In judging it, we will follow the line of the Psalm which now lies open before us.

We perceive that men who talked in this godless fashion were proud. Therefore the prayer, “Lift up Yourself, You Judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.” The man who thinks that God is not in the world, or is not at all concerned in its affairs, thinks that he is, himself, about the greatest person in existence. There may be some other poor creatures

about, but he is, in many respects, the most deserving of esteem. He who thinks little of God, thinks much of himself. “Who is the Lord,” he says, “that I should obey His voice?”

Who talks like this but Pharaoh, the king, the potent one, accustomed to having his own will in everything? Those speak exceeding proud who have no knowledge of the Most High. Measuring themselves by others like themselves, they are not wise. The worm exalts itself above its meaner fellow worms and dreams not of the great Eternal One who fills all things. Pride is very apt to grow great when knowledge is small, and reverence is absent. Proud language usually goes with profane talk and blasphemous ideas. For it comes of the same kindred. “How long shall they utter and speak hard things? And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?”

If there is no God, or no God to care about, then straightway men delight in uttering things which make the blood of the godly curdle. They render no praise to God, since they seek all glory for themselves. Because of their own conceit, they question His wisdom, cavil at His Word, doubt His justice, impugn the sentences of His bar and speak evil of Him even as they wish. Give a man of proud heart a fluent tongue and opportunity enough to speak of God, and then take away from him the idea that God hears him—and there is no telling to what lengths of profanity he will hasten. His tongue is set on fire by Hell and it burns with an inconceivable fury.

If you have ever been forced to hear or read the expressions of renowned infidels, you can form some idea of how completely Satan works his will with godless men. Take God away and the brakes are taken off, and the train dashes down hill at terrific speed. “Their tongue walks through the earth,” says David. No bounds can be set to the evil perambulations of an atheistic tongue. Not even Heaven itself is free from the assaults of its pride—“They set their mouth against the heavens.” They slander God, Himself, because they imagine that He does not hear.

Nor is this the end of the mischief. When the fear of God is taken away from men, they frequently proceed to persecute His servants. The Prophet complains, “They break in pieces Your people, O Lord, and afflict Your heritage.” As they hate God, so they manifest their hate against His people. If they cannot get at the leader, if they cannot smite the shepherd, they will at least worry the flock. Read the long and cruel story of human malice against the Church of God—it mingles with the record of every nation—it is an awful history, written in tears and gore.

The sacramental host of God’s elect has left behind it in its marches a trail of blood and ashes, filling up, in the persons of the persecuted, that which was behind of the sufferings of the Lord. For all that grief was meant for Him if His enemies could but have poured it on His head. At times it has seemed as if God had given up His people and caused the rod of the wicked to rest upon His heritage. No wonder that it was so with them. For thus it pleased Him to deal with his Only-Begotten Son. He delivered Him up to the world to do with Him as it wished. The Father did not interpose, though they spat in His face, though they scourged Him, though they blindfolded Him and buffeted Him and made nothing of Him.

Yes, though they nailed Him to the accursed tree and stood to gloat their cruel eyes upon His agonies, the great God did not interfere to save the Beloved of His soul. A greater force than almighty power held omnipotence itself in check, that it should not lift its finger to rescue the Lord’s Anointed. If He was to save others, He could not be saved Himself. Though He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” yet Jehovah left His own Son to die in the hands of the ungodly. You know the reason why. But, apart from that, it was a strange procedure.

The Lord may deal thus with His own Church and His own cause, till His people cry, “How has the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger!” The Truth of God may appear to be wounded, slain, dead and even buried. But yet, as Jesus rose again, so shall His true Church and cause rise again, though they are laid in the grave and the stone is sealed, and the watch is set. Truth, though entombed, must rise again. For her Lord arose and God is with His cause as He was with His Son.

Beloved, when men think that there is no God and speak evil of the Most High, we need not wonder that they take liberty to persecute the chosen of God. There is no telling to what lengths of cruelty men will go when unhindered by a sense of God’s Presence. The Psalm says, “They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.” Take God away and what a place this world would be! Without religion our earth would soon become a huge Aceldama, a field of blood. Ah, dear Friends, men little know what they owe to the presence of God’s people even in a city like this. There is no reason but religion, why London should not become like Paris during the Reign of Terror.

If it were not that God has respect to the faithful that dwell in the midst of the city, He might give it over to the ungodly. And no greater plague could come upon it. When men say, “Does God see? Does God know?” then they seek every man his own. And, if they can, they turn like tigers upon each other—society is torn to pieces and the weak are devoured. If the Lord had not left us a remnant who fear His name, we had been as Sodom and had been made like unto Gomorrah. There is no telling how far the Evil One may be let loose to excite men to evil. But, in any case, the chosen means of the devil will be the spread of atheistic principles among the masses. A world without God is a world without fear, without Law, without order, without hope.

Note well, that if we were persuaded that God did not hear and did not see, there would be an end of worship, would there not? Could you worship a deaf God? I must confess that such a being would not be God to me. If He could not hear and hear all things, I should see at once a limit to His nature. And a being of limited nature is not God, since God is and must be, of necessity, infinite, to be God at all. Though it is hard to conceive what infinity must be, we must predicate it of the Godhead. And, if it is gone, the Godhead is gone with it—and there is an end of belief in God.

The idea of a deaf God is absurd. Does not Jehovah see me? If not, then He does not see all things—He is blind to something. Could you worship a blind God? If you could, you are on a par with those to whom you talk of sending missionaries. For their gods “have eyes but they see not— they have ears, but they hear not.” And they that make them as like unto they are. He is an idolater and not a worshipper of the living and true God, who worships a being of whom he entertains the notion that he cannot hear or see. There is clearly an end of worship when there is an end of belief in a hearing and observing God.

Nor is this all—it seems to me that there is, to a large extent, an end of the moral sense—if there is no God to punish sin, then every man will do as seems right in his own eyes. And why should he not? By what consideration will he be hindered? If there is no reward for righteousness, and righteousness involves self-denial, why should he deny himself? If there is to be no punishment for sin and sin is pleasurable, why should he not seize the pleasure?

Take away all thought that God sees and hears, and you have removed the underlying basis upon which morality itself is to be built up. A godless world is a lawless world. Anarchy comes in when the fear of God goes out. And all the mischiefs that you can imagine, and much more, rush in like a flood. Without God, or even with a god that does not see and does not hear, where is the hope of the despairing? Tonight she will go home with a broken heart, for, alas, her last friend is dead. She will cover her face and sit astonished in her sorrow. And now what can she do?

Poor woman, with no helper upon earth, where will she look? If she can bow by the side of that poor bed and cast her care on God, that loves and cares for her, she will rise out of the deep of her distress. But if there is none in Heaven to note her misery, the help of the helpless, the hope of the hopeless, is taken away. What now remains? And he that is full of disease, and near to die—upon whom the physician has looked down as he lies in the hospital and has shaken his head. He knows that his doom is sealed, and that he will never quit that bed except to exchange it for the grave—if he has no God, how will he turn his face to the wall in the gall of bitterness, and moan in anguish never to be relieved?

But if God sees and hears, the widow is not without a helper and the dying man, in all his agony, is not without a hope. O cruel Unbelief, put not out our one sun, take not from the mourner his one consolation. Let me lose myself, but not my God, who is more than life to me. Yes, if you can, you may blot the glory out of Heaven and silence every angel’s harp, and quench in endless night the sevenfold luster of the celestial light. But leave me my God and I shall have all Heaven back again in Him and somewhat more.

Oh, yes, a God that hears and sees—we must have Him—or else we are orphaned indeed! If God does not see and hear, we are shipwrecked upon the rock of blank atheism. I do not care a bit what men believe in, whether it is pantheism, or agnosticism, or theism. If they have no personal God that hears and sees, they have, in fact, no God at all. “There is a power that makes for righteousness,” said one. But if that power is insensible and never communicates with man and never notices him, there is nothing in the forced admission of any use to him who makes it or hears it. It is big talk, such as men call “bosh,” and nothing more.

Though it is veiled in the language of philosophy, the scientific jargon which makes God into insensible force is covert atheism. I must have a God that hears and sees, and comes into the arena of my daily life and helps me because He loves me, or else I have no God. My God dwells with me and works for me, or else I have no God. Fine words, pretty phrases and magnificent definitions, are so many bags of wind and go for nothing—there cannot be a deaf God, nor a blind God, nor an insensible God. If any of you so believe, go to Bedlam and find there your fit associates. As for us, we know that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is the living God and His memorial is that He hears prayer. So much for the first point.

II. But, secondly, THE NOTION THAT GOD CANNOT SEE AND HEAR IS AN ABSURD NOTION. According to our text, it is proved to be unreasonable. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?” Think of that argument—here is a creature which has ears and can hear—the God who created that being—can He not hear? Has He given to His creature more than He has Himself? Has He made a creature which excels Himself in essential faculties? Has He bestowed a sense which He Himself never had? How can it be? The God that makes a man with ears to hear, must possess hearing Himself.

The very idea of hearing seems to me to necessitate that He who conceived the idea was Himself able to hear. He could not have borrowed the idea, for there was no other being but Himself in the beginning—from where die He get the thought but from His own being? That the mind of man should be reached by the gate of the ear, by an impression upon an auditory nerve, is a wonderful conception. If you do not think so, because you are so used to it, I would like you to tell me whether you could invent a sixth sense. You have hearing, smelling, taste, feeling, seeing. Will you invent another? You have not the power to invent another sense. And the idea of any sense which now exists must have been equally a feat of boundless wisdom, impossible to a being who could not hear and see.

He that invented the idea, also planned the way by which hearing would become possible. What an intellect was that which forged the link between matter and mind, so that the movements of particles of air and the impression made by these upon the drum of the ear should turn into impressions upon mind and heart! God must have every power in perfection, or He could not have contrived and constructed such an admirable instrument as the ear.

I should not think the time ill-spent if I were able to give you a lecture upon the human ear. We know far less about it than we do concerning the eye. And my own knowledge of it is so scant that I can only glance at the subject. That outer portion which we commonly call the ear is only the vestibule of curious, intricate, winding passages which communicate with chambers of bone and vaults of ivory. Curtains are stretched along these passages—membranes which tremble as the head of a drum, or vibrate

like a tambourine.

Between two of these parchment curtains a chain of very small bones is extended. Have you ever heard of the stirrup bone? Rows of fine threads, or nerves, convey the motion, or the sound, into the brain, and there the soul sits waiting for the news. It is all wonderful. Nor must I forget to remind you that the ear is “planted.” The important part—the real ear—is so deeply seated in the head, as to be beyond a mere external inspection. The lobe of the ear is like a leaf above ground but the hearing organ is “planted” in the skull. It is placed very near the brain and operates on both sides of it, so as to keep the whole mind in communication with sounds from every quarter. The ear is set deep, and its chambers—some filled with air and some filled with liquid—are thus protected from much harm, which might otherwise come to them from the outer world.

An ear doctor who explained to you the mechanism of the ear should make you feel that an undevout member of his profession is mad. The infinite wisdom of God is seen in this gate of sense. And it is there in far greater measure than we can perceive. And can you believe that this marvelous instrument for hearing was made by a deaf God, or a dead God, or an impersonal power? Or that it came into existence through “a fortuitous concourse of atoms”? I know not the precise terms in which they now attempt to describe creation without a Creator, design without a designer. But I can say that those who believe in ears created by an unhearing force or being, have more faith than I can muster.

No, I venture to say that their faith has overleaped itself, has climbed to the top of the ladder and gone down on the other side—so that, instead of being great faith, it has rotted into gross credulity. To fly from the difficulties of faith to the impossibilities of unbelief, is a singular infatuation. I prefer to believe in a personal, intelligent First Cause.

But even if you had an ear made—and I suppose that it would be no very great difficulty to fashion, in wax or some other substance, an exact resemblance to an ear—could you produce hearing then? God alone gives the life which hears. That particular point in which motion is translated into audible sound—where is that? That thing which hears—I mean not the vibrating parchment, nor the telephonic nerves—but that living something which is informed by the nerves and reads their message—where and what is that something?

The surgeon searches with his knife but he declares that he cannot find it. No, he cannot find it—it has fled before his instrument of search. But this much is sure—once gone, he cannot restore it. He could not make it in the first place, nor renew it when once departed. Not the whole troop of surgeons and physicians of all the hospitals could suffice to create a soul. There is a spiritual something—the true man—and this it is which God makes. Do you know yourself? Could you put your finger on yourself? Oh, no. That mystic being, that strange, half God-like existence, the soul, is not within the range of our senses. He that made the soul, has He no soul? Can He not hear? O Sirs, the argument is plain enough. It needs no elaboration. It carries conviction at first sight.

To imagine that the Creator of life does not see and hear is absurd. And yet the devil tempts gracious people, the best of people, at times to think that the Lord does not observe them in their trials. “Oh,” they say, “God is too great, surely, to hear me, a poor sinful woman, or a frail, ignorant man. His greatness must prevent His hearing me.” Yet, surely, you would not think the Lord deaf because you are unworthy. You would not attribute to Him a greatness which would really involve littleness. If you make Him so great that He is deaf, or so grand that He is blind, you have dishonored Him.

“No,” you say, “but, surely, God does not see and hear everything. Look at my great sorrow—why does He allow it to grow and deepen? What keen miseries are caused by my thoughts! As George Herbert puts it, ‘My thoughts are all a case of knives.’ ” Just so. And yet the Lord knows and permits it all in love to your soul. He does not forget you. But, “like as a father pities his children,” so does He pity you. Do not be led astray by the idea that you are passed over and forgotten by your God. “He knows the number of the stars, He calls them all by their names.” And he knows you, also, especially and individually.

Last summer I noticed a small flower in the center of a beech-wood in the New Forest. Surrounded by the princely trees of the woods, it smiled from the sod, a modest beauty. I thought to myself, “When do you see the sun? Does his light and glory ever cheer you?” I tarried in that forest and watched the sunbeams smiling through the interlacing branches of the trees. And while I lingered I marked how, finally, the sun found out a way to pour his golden glory directly into the center of that flower, which glowed and smiled as Heaven thus communed with its littleness.

Rest assured that God, who is our Sun, thinks of the least of us. We are not neglected weeds of the moorland. The Lord sees us. We do not waste our sweetness on the desert air. For God is there. Those valleys among the mountains, virgin of the foot of man, are trod by the great Husbandman. Those are His Holy Places, His private gardens, His secret haunts. And the flowers which bloom in them are as plants of a royal garden, which make glad the heart of the King. So too, you hidden ones, your God does not forget you. No, though you may be tempted to think that He does not hear and see everything—for men are so vile and error is so rampant—He puts up with their provocations. Yes, he considers all.

I have been inclined to cry out myself, as the Psalmist did, “Why withdraw You Your hand, even Your right hand? Pluck it out of Your bosom.” That the Lord lets evil doctrine have so long a day is a great disquietude to a lover of the Truth of God. Ah, but the Lord hears every blasphemy, and marks it—and the day will come, as surely as He lives—when He will lift His right hand to smite down the edifices of error, and they shall be before Him as a bowing wall and a tottering fence. “The way of the wicked He turns upside down.” “Trust in the Lord forever.”

In the cloudy and dark day look for the Light. He does see—He does hear—He must work for truth and righteousness. Shall He that made the ear not hear? Shall He that formed the eye not see? Be not guilty of so absurd a thought as to fancy that these evil days are not watched over by

the Lord.  
III. But now, thirdly and briefly, THAT GOD HEARS HIS OWN MUST  
BE ESPECIALLY CERTAIN, from the very argument of the text. “Why?”  
you say. Why, because they have new and spiritual ears and they have  
God-given spiritual eyes. And He that planted the spiritual ear, shall He  
not hear? And He that formed the spiritual eye, shall He not see? It has  
come to pass, my Brethren, that now when God speaks by His Spirit we  
hear Him, blessed be His name! Time was when His threats spoke to us as  
with noise of thunder. But we would not hear them.  
Now we are humbled in the dust by His anger. He has given us ears  
which are joined to hearts of flesh. When He speaks by way of invitation,  
and says, “Seek you My face,” we answer, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” Do  
you imagine that if God has given us the Divine Grace to hear His voice,  
He will not hear us when we lift up our voices to Him? Rather let us each  
one say, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak. For He will speak peace  
unto His people and to His saints.”  
Did He give you a new ear only that you might hear Him chide you? Did  
He intend never to regard your answer to His rebukes? Does He convince  
you of sin without intending to grant you a Savior? Does He bring you to  
hear the Law and to confess sin and ask for pardon? And can He not, will  
He not, hear you? Has He made you to hear of judgment to torment you  
before your time? Will He shut His ears to your humble prayers? I will not  
believe it. He that gave you those spiritual ears meant to say something  
worth your hearing and He meant to hear you when you cried to Him. He  
has spoken, and some of us are tonight full of ecstasy at what we have  
heard Him say. Has he not said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will  
deliver you and you shall glorify Me”?  
If you hear Him speak, He will hear you speak. Oh, that you would sit  
at His feet and ask Him to speak. And then you may be sure that He has  
inclined His ear unto you! He has created in the minds of some of you a  
sense of need and will He not pity you? Perhaps you have not reached any  
farther than to know your wants and dangers. But He gave you this  
knowledge. You are hungry and thirsty. You had not these spiritual appetites once. He gave them to you. Why? You were not hungry for mercy.  
You were not thirsty for righteousness till his Spirit came and gave you  
life and with that life the soul-hunger.  
Will He not satisfy the hunger He creates? Will He not fulfill the desire  
He has implanted? I never heard of such cruelty as for a man to gather  
together five hundred poor people from the street who had learned to draw  
tight their hunger-belts and bear privation, and all of a sudden to excite a  
ravenous hunger in them, and then turn them adrift and say, “Go your  
ways. I have made you feel your necessities most terribly. But I have nothing else for you. I have shown you your true condition. I have made you  
know what destitution you feel. Be off with you!”  
God will not treat you thus. It is not like He. He that planted holy longings and hungry pining and spiritual appetites, must intend to supply  
them. He that has made you hear the voice of your need, will hear it Himself. He is far quicker of hearing than you can be, and your wants appeal  
to His heart before your heart is awake to them. “He that planted the ear,  
shall He not hear?” He that gives spiritual life will live Himself to sustain  
that life.  
In addition to this, He makes us long after holiness. Will He not work it  
in us? I might say of myself and many dear Brothers and Sisters here,  
that we habitually desire to be holy and to be wholly free from sin. We  
cannot endure evil. A preacher once declared that when Paul cried, “O  
wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this  
death?” he was not a Christian. That shows how very little that preacher  
knew about the matter. No man but a true Believer would have such anguish on account of sin.  
Just in proportion as he became a Christian of the highest order, would  
he cry out in an agony when he found evil thoughts and tendencies within  
his nature. It is when we begin to loathe sin, and any leaning towards  
sin—and when we grow wretched because of a single evil thought—that  
we have grown in Divine Grace and are far advanced and are reaching towards that other verse, “Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory.” A  
true Believer must hate sin with an intense hatred. And when the Lord  
has given him the desire to do so, he may be sure that the same Lord will  
give deliverance from the power of evil.  
He who makes you hate sin will answer to that detestation, and deliver  
you from that which you so greatly loathe. Does He make you pine after  
holiness and will He deny you holiness? Do you hear His voice of command and will He not hear your prayer for help to obey? Does your child  
pine to be good and can you help him to be good and will you not do so?  
To the ear which God has enabled to hear His call, the Lord will lend His  
own ear to hear prayer. Surely, the very holiness of God that puts into us  
a desire to be holy is a guarantee to us that He will help us to be holy. He that makes us long for purity will work it in us. It may be He will  
put us in the furnace. But by some means He will purify us as silver is refined. He that planted the desire after holiness is Himself holy and will  
work holiness in His people.  
Do you not sometimes sit down and indulge a daydream of what you  
had wished to be? Do you not wake up and put down your feet and say,  
“This is what I resolve to be, God helping me. I will endeavor to live nearer  
to my Lord and to be more like my Lord Jesus.” Then you feel a fire burning upon the altar of your heart. You feel that you must put forth all your  
energies in the Divine life and press forward after the highest degrees of  
Divine Grace. Be encouraged by this condition of desire, for your Lord will  
not deny it to you. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?” He that  
planted in your heart the desire after this high ideal will hear you as you  
cry to Him for aid in the sacred enterprise. The Creator answers to that  
which He has created—“He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him.” Do you pray, Brothers and Sisters? I know you do. But do you really  
believe that God hears you? I cannot help thinking that a great mass of  
prayers are poured into a vacuum. I cannot shake off the thought that  
Brethren seem often to be praying into eternal emptiness, pleading with an infinite nothing. They say the proper words, but they mean little or nothing by them. Does God hear prayer? Do you answer, “Yes”? Then let us pray as if we truly believed that He did. When we have done praying,  
let us expect Him to answer us.  
When we go into the bank with our checks, we hand them in, take up  
the money and are gone. Do we deal thus at the Bank of Faith? Do we  
plead the promise? If so, the Lord counts out the money. But do we take it  
up? I fear we leave it on the counter. The Lord might say, “Is that man  
gone? Gone without what he came for? He pleaded My promise, and has  
he gone away content without My reply?”  
Is it your habit to go to the Throne of Mercy and ask for the mere sake  
of asking? Do you grind at a mill for the mere pleasure of grinding? Surely  
he that asks receives. And if he does not, he should enquire the reason  
why. A little time before prayer, to prepare the petition, would much help  
towards reality in prayer. A little time after prayer, to consider when and  
how the blessing is to be used when the Lord sends it, would be a further  
aid to faith.  
Sometimes the angels come to our letter-boxes and cannot put in the  
answers because the boxes are fastened down by unbelief. We are not  
prepared to receive what God is prepared to give. Let us pray, believing  
that as surely as God has given us an ear, He has an ear Himself, and will  
hear our pleadings. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?” Brothers and Sisters, we are at this time greatly concerned about the  
Master’s kingdom. Some of us have no other trouble comparable to our  
anxiety about the cause of God and His Truth. We mourn as we see the  
evil leaven leavening the whole lump. Do you not think that the great  
Head of the Church is as much concerned about it as we are? It is His  
own kingdom. It is, therefore, more upon His mind than it can be upon  
ours. It is God’s own Truth which is denied—it is His own Son that is dishonored.  
The glorious doctrine of the atonement—when we hear it scoffed at—we  
burn with indignation and our heart breaks with grief. Does not the Lord’s  
heart also burn with indignation when the precious blood is trampled on?  
Is He indifferent to all this apostasy and heresy? Depend upon it, He is  
not. For “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?” And He that has  
sworn to glorify His Son, will He forever stand still when that Son is dishonored, even in His own Church?  
IV. I have done when I say just this one thing more—A BELIEF THAT  
GOD HEARS AND SEES HAS A VERY BENEFICIAL TENDENCY UPON  
THOSE WHO FIRMLY HOLD IT. It works good in a thousand ways. Time  
would fail me to recount a tithe of them. It may suffice to take a thought  
or two, and turn the matter over in our minds. If we feel that God sees  
and hears, what an incentive it is to do right and to be valiant for His  
Truth! Soldiers will play the man in the presence of their prince. If our  
Lord looks on, what will we not do and dare?  
The same sense of His Presence will act as a check to any and every  
deed of sin. We cannot indulge the thought of evil when the Lord Himself  
hears that thought. Does the Lord look on and shall I sin in His Divine Presence? Shall I grieve Jesus when the Beloved of my soul is Himself close to me and watches, with regretful eye, each sinful movement? The solemn conviction that God hears is a check to evil and a stimulus for  
good.  
It acts grandly as a preservative against the desire of applause and the  
fear of man. He who knows assuredly that God hears him will speak the  
truth though all the world should listen, or though no one but God should

hear him. It was a beautiful word which was spoken by a soldier to an  
open-air preacher not long ago. A friend who was preaching in the street  
had gathered a considerable audience. But as a troop of soldiers went by,  
with colors and martial music, the people were dispersed and the  
preacher was  
left almost alone. A soldier, who for some reason was marching outside  
the ranks, called to him, “Go on, Sir—God loves to hear you praising His  
Son Jesus.”  
True, most true. God delights in the glories of Christ. What a grand audience you have if the Lord hearkens and hears you praising His Son! Do  
the despisers grind their teeth when they hear Jesus preached? Never  
mind. Let them wear out their hearts in wrath. They cannot rob Jesus of a  
beam of brightness. Keep on praising your Lord and Savior. For if men  
who have ears to hear will not hear, yet be sure your heavenly Father will  
not fail to listen.  
We do not want applause from men, since God hears us. If the Queen  
were present and a soldier performed a deed of valor and a person were to  
say to him, “You did well and you may be proud that Corporal Brown and  
Sergeant Smith saw you and approved of what you did.” “Oh,” he would  
say, “I care nothing for corporals and other petty officers. Her Majesty  
herself looked at me and said, ‘Well done.’ She will, with her own hands  
put the Victoria Cross upon me in due time. That is the reward I seek.” If God sees me, it is a small matter who may, or who may not see, and  
approve. We need to grow thus healthily independent of human judgment—for he who fawns for smiles, or trembles at frowns, will never lead a  
noble life for long. The assurance that God sees and hears, is a wonderful  
care-killer. Why should I be anxious? My heavenly Father knows that I  
have need of these things. What if I am in trouble? This, my Father  
knows. Brethren, if the Lord knows our soul is in adversity, and if his eye  
is ever upon us, are we not safe? Know that you serve One whose eyes are  
upon the righteous and whose ears are open to their cry and you will live  
above care.  
And, oh, how this will tend to promote your fellowship with God! When  
your heart sings, “He leads me. He hears me. He knows the way that I  
take,” then are you filled with a sense of fellowship with the Eternal God.  
How we love Him who hears us always! Since He is always seeing us, we  
learn to see Him. “You God see me,” is a word which brightens up our sad  
hearts till we also see God. We pass through the trouble, and toil, and  
temptation, and turmoil of this mortal life with serene spirit, since it is  
written, “Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.”  
Suffering is no mean thing, if we suffer in full submission to the will of Him that hears and sees us. If He is but with us, all question is ended. We cheerfully say, “It is the Lord—let Him do what seems Him good.” As long as his father was captain of the ship, his little son never knew a fear. For  
he was sure his father could steer the vessel safely to the haven. Be of good cheer—our Father who sees and hears us, is in the midst of  
His people—and not so much as one of them shall perish. If the Lord were  
away, or asleep, or deaf, we might be in a trembling mood. But while His  
ears and eyes are open to us, we cannot tolerate mistrust. By a little altering of the quaint poet’s lines, we may say—  
*“Though winds and waves assault my keel, He does preserve it. He does steer,  
Even when the boat seems most to reel.  
Storms are the triumph of His art,  
He cannot hide His eyes, much less His heart.”*  
Go, speak with the wise Planter of the ear. For He will surely hear!

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON  
BELOVED READERS—From afar I greet you with hearty salutations. I am resting with the earnest desire that I may gain health and refreshment of mind for future service. I knew right well several well-beloved and useful Brethren who were weary and worn but, humanly speaking, would have soon been restored if they could have rested. They kept on painfully for a while and then died. Friends from all quarters have pointed to these beacons and have bid me take warning. And I feel that I am right in doing so. I hope to do more by attempting less.

You will be glad to know that the Special Services at the Tabernacle have been, in a memorable manner, attended with the Divine blessing. May the printed sermons, in the absence of the preacher, have an equally remarkable share in the sacred benediction!

It is in answer to many requests that this particular sermon has been selected. May it be as much enjoyed by the reader in the perusal, as by the preacher in its delivery! With it comes my hearty love in Christ Jesus to each one of the great host who, week by week, drink in the Word of God through the reading of these sermons.  
Yours very heartily,  
*C. H. SPURGEON.*  
Mentone, December 7, 1889.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3291 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SEA! THE SEA! THE WIDE AND OPEN SEA!  
NO. 3291

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN SAILORS’ SOCIETY.

**“The sea is His, for He made it: and His hands formed the dry land.” Psalm 95:5.**

THIS Psalm exhorts us to sing joyfully unto God. Whether we contemplate the land or the sea, there will be found upon them both abundant reasons for adoring the great Creator. Some, I know, as they walk upon the land, can no more praise Him than if it were one vast desert of Sahara—and yet the earth is full of His goodness—it is as a garden yielding not only food for man and beast, but lovely and fragrant flowers! Forest and field, mountain and plain alike sing out the praises of the Lord! Nor is the sea less rich in excitements to worship the Lord our Maker. Ignorant persons regard the sea as a dreary waste of waters. In the olden times, our home-loving forefathers were desperately afraid of the sea and looked upon it as a devouring monster. It was a “melancholy ocean” to them—a place of constant sorrow and sudden death—they shuddered as they thought of it. But, indeed, to him who is rightly taught, the sea is full of beauty! Its every wave is lit up with splendor—the sea is the Lord’s, for He made it! You see then, that both on the land and on the sea adoration is in its place. Praise is never out of season at any time and worship is never foreign in any land. It matters not whether we travel over sand or snow, or how we are tossed about on Arctic or tropical sea— we are still in the pasture of the Great Shepherd, and within the palace of the Great King. Praise the Lord from the earth and let dragons and all deeps join in the Psalm. “Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”

At this time I shall ask you only to think of the sea. I could far more easily preach upon this text if I were standing in one of my delightful haunts by the Mediterranean, looking over its blue waters, hidden away in the cleft of a rock, with the spray at my feet. Then, I think, I should not coldly read the words, but clap my hand, as I cried with my heart, “The sea is His, for He made it.” Here we are, however—stranded on this white-cliffed island and banished from the fresh sea breezes to this huge Babylon of bricks where men appear to forget God since they see so little of His world and so much of their own! Let us try, if we can, to transport ourselves to the wide and open sea and as we gaze all around and see nothing but the rolling waves, let us sing—

*“He formed the deeps unknown,  
He gave the seas their bound.  
The watery worlds are all His own,  
And all the solid ground.”*

There is no need for any labored division in our sermon tonight. Our first one will be that God made the sea. And the second will be that therefore it is His. And the third shall come out of the next verse—He is therefore to be adored. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!”

I. Our first thought is that GOD MADE THE SEA.  
Somebody made it and who else could have made it but God? It is not often that you find a seafaring man who is an atheist. Addison tells us of a time when he was aboard ship and there was a passenger on deck who was an infidel. He was reported to the captain as an atheist and neither he nor the sailors could make out what sort of a strange fish that might be—and so asked him what he meant. They were told that he did not believe in a God. A storm coming on, the men proposed that they should pitch him overboard seeing he did not believe in God Almighty! But he was soon cured of his unbelief, for, when things looked threatening, the first person who was down on his knees crying for mercy in great terror was the precious atheist, who soon got rid of his atheism when he felt in danger of his life! A little while ago, a Christian minister crossing to America was walking the deck with a gentleman who called himself an atheist. It was a very bad night and the vessel had to steam on in the teeth of a head wind. It would have been fatal to let her drift. The captain said, “We cannot keep any watch, we must drive ahead, and if we run into an iceberg, there’s an end of us.” Our friend, who believed in God, hearing this, said that he should turn in and go to sleep. His companion declared that he could not think of doing any such thing—he should not like to die in his sleep—and so he would walk the deck, rough as it was. All night long he who had no God was cold and wet with watching, fretting and worrying because he was afraid he should die, while my friend slept sweetly and rose in the morning fresh as a lark! Coming on deck, he accosted the philosopher, “What? Have you not turned in?” “No, no.” He was miserable, he was unhappy. “Why,” said the Believer, “I trust in my heavenly Father and I fell asleep, and I feel quite refreshed. What good have you got by staying here?” “I must confess,” said the other, “you Believers have the best of it when you get to sea.” Yes, and assuredly we have the best of it on land, too! We have the best of it in health, in sickness, in death—and we shall have the best of it forever!

God made the sea, and the prints of His hands are still to be seen. Skillful persons can tell that a picture is by a certain artist by its style. It is not everybody that can judge well, but a man skilled in art knows the touch of each painter’s brush. “That is Rembrandt,” cries the artist, “he alone could produce such lights and shadows! And the other is by Salvator Rosa—I know the master’s hand.” He also who has sought out the works of the Lord and has pleasure therein, knows the great Father’s style. The same sublime mind which gave us the Holy Scriptures also ordained the channels of the deep. I am absolutely sure that He who reveals the secrets of the soul is He in whose hands are the deep places of the sea. His commandment is exceedingly broad, even as the main ocean—and of His Divine Grace we are compelled to cry, “O the depth!” even as when we sound the Atlantic!  
I will not go into the question tonight, but there are wonderful points of likeness between the Word and the work of the Almighty. The sea is a mystery of waters and Scripture is sometimes obscure—but yet the sea shines like a mirror and in Scripture we see the Lord as in a glass! The Bible has its most terrible storms and its calms most restful—it is full of life, even as the sea nourishes innumerable creeping things, both small and great beasts. It is full of power, even as the sea moves in the fullness of its strength. There is a certain peculiar light of its own within the Word, as if it were all sun and flame, even as at times the waters are a liquid light and the waves shine as with ten thousand stars! The wisdom, goodness, power and infinity of God are all to be seen in the ocean by those who have opened eyes. He who knows God can see His hand in the scales of every little fish. If he takes up a five-finger or a crab, he perceives a master hand in the fashioning of its smallest members! If you take a beautiful needle, however admirably polished, and put it under the microscope, you say to yourself, “A man made this,” for it looks like a rough bar of iron—the microscope discovers its lack of finish. But if you take a frill of seaweed, or the eye of a shrimp, and put these under the glass, you exclaim at once, “No man ever made this! No man could have made it. It is perfection!” I shall not go into further details, but I am sure that he who is acquainted with the works of God sees at once that the sea is God’s creature—and in its ever-changing sameness, in its awe-inspiring majesty, in its tremendous force, unsearchable mystery, its waves and caverns, its calms and storms—it tells of an invincible hand, an unsearchable mind!  
God made the sea—you can mark His wisdom there. Philosophers tell us there is just as much water in the sea as there ought to be, and no more. Perhaps if there were twice as much sea as we now have, we should not be able to live—and if there were any less, the world would become too dry for human habitation. The land and water balance each other to an ounce and a drop—there can be neither more nor less. Permanent and fixed are the relations and proportions of matter. Substances may change their combinations, but of the elements, the same amount must abide till all things pass away. That the sea is salt and, therefore, does not corrupt. That it is moved with tides and, therefore, does not stagnate. That it evaporates and, therefore, does not increase so as to drown the earth, are all instances of Divine Wisdom. If its waters were more or less salt than they are, many fishes would die and the floating power of the ocean would change. There is a relation between the size of the ocean and the balancing of a dewdrop upon its blade of grass—a proportion between a hurricane and the dancing of a gnat in the summer’s sun. The more we study the sea the more shall we say, “Your way, O Lord, is in the sea and Your path in the great waters.”  
And certainly no man can deny the power which thunders across the billows. What tremendous force is there displayed! “The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yes than the mighty waves of the sea.” When one has seen the damage the sea has worked upon our coasts, the way in which the hardest rock has been worn away—when one has sadly watched a huge boat tossed to and fro like a plaything and when one has heard how the largest vessels are caught in a cyclone and whirled away like feathers—one bows upon his face before the Almighty Lord who rules the sea! And yet God’s goodness is there as well. The sea is a great benefactor! Where were the clouds, and where the rains, and where our harvests, if it were not for the ocean? The sea feeds myriads with its fish and enriches many more by its commerce. It was once thought to divide nations, but now it has been the highway by which they communicate—a silver belt by which all lands are bound to one another! England, above all nations, has reason to see the goodness of God in the sea. Perhaps we had not even remained a nation if the silver streak had not separated us from the continent. Most probably we had not been a free nation, or a Protestant nation, if the Lord had not bid the waters encompass us—  
*“O Britain, praise your mighty God,  
And make His honor known abroad!  
He bade the ocean round you flow,  
Not bars of brass could guard you so.”*  
May God inspire British hearts with gratitude to Him for setting old England like a queen in the midst of the sea where she laughs at the tyrant’s power!  
Every attribute of God shines in the sea although the more spiritual and precious are but dimly seen, these being reserved to be manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord, before whose feet the sea crouched in reverence! Perhaps even those attributes will be discovered to be there in some degree when our eyes shall be strengthened to see the Glory of the Lord in all His works. Till then we will listen to the sea and think of it as an—

*“Impassioned orator with lips sublime, Whose waves are arguments which prove a God.”*

God made the sea. I delight to reflect upon this fact, for it brings us so very near to God. Yonder at our feet are the blue waves which He has created. You have certain treasures which you value greatly because they were made by a dear friend, and you say, “Whenever I look at them I seem to feel him near.” Thus do God’s works make us feel that He is not far from us. Mungo Park, in the deserts of Africa, had his heart cheered by taking up a little bit of moss and reflecting that God made it, and that the Creator had been there and was there, watching over the tiny green thing! Come, then, my Friend, and stand by the sea and say to yourself, “The sea is His, for He made it. Here is something that my heavenly Father made. He has left His footprints on these waves. He is still here and His power works forever.” The palpitating heart of the sea, with it perpetual tide, tells of God’s present life. Its alternate advance and retreat at His bidding prove His present majesty, for He says, “To here shall you come, but no further.”

I trust many of my seafaring friends have often felt near to God when alone upon the vast deep. God is in Ratcliff Highway, but it is uncommonly hard to find Him. We could find fifty devils there in five minutes, sooner than find a trace of God—for there is the den of the drunkard, there is the foul haunt in which men are robbed and ruined—the house of the strange woman, of which Solomon says, “the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of Hell.” Far out at sea the sailor is free from the danger of falling tiles and chimney-pots when the wind is blowing. And he is also free from many a temptation which besets him on shore. Often, I have no doubt, when you have been alone, watching at night, pacing the deck to and fro and looking up to the bright stars, you have thought, “God is very near me now.” I remember, when going to Hamburg, I stood at night with the captain upon the quarter-deck and suddenly a light seemed to rush down the mast and light up the rigging and the whole ship in such a manner as I never saw before. For an instant the vessel seemed to be on fire, and then the light was gone! “What is that?” I asked. “What is that?” he said, for neither of us knew—but we felt awe-struck. Seafaring men meet with them often—strange things that we “land lubbers” never dream about! “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.” God seems to come very near to those who are on the waters. When the wind howls and the sea booms, the noise would suffice to drown a thousand volleys of artillery. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of Glory thunders: the Lord is upon many waters.” When men mount up to Heaven and go down again to the deep, then is God present to them and they cry unto Him in their trouble. The sea has often forced men to exclaim—

*“Great God, how infinite are Thee!  
What worthless worms are we!”*

The fact that God made the sea should make us feel more confidence in venturing upon it. We may trust ourselves upon the King’s highway! We may go where Jesus went, and where the Lord reigns—“The Lord sits upon the flood; yes the Lord sits King forever.” As “all things work together for good to them that love God,” there is nothing left to work for evil. The sea cannot destroy those whom God would preserve. Even if the sea in its tempestuous mood should take away our lives, what will it do but waft us to the gates of Heaven? It is as well to go to Glory by water as by land—perhaps drowning is an easier death than expiring with broken bones or torturing pains. You who are about to emigrate to Australia or to America and are feeling dreadfully troubled tonight at the thought of the terrible sea, should be of good courage. Your Master went to sea and His disciples went with Him—they, too, were tossed with tempest, and yet their vessel and the other little ships which sailed on the billows of dark Galilee were safe! Our Master, who is Lord High Admiral on the seas, brought all the fleet into harbor safe and sound! He has not given up His rank, or lost His power, and He will save all who sail under His convoy. No tempest or tornado shall wreck a soul that is in His charge!

This ought to make us feel at rest as to those who lie buried beneath the waves. I have heard it said by one or two whom I have known, “I would not have minded, Sir, if they could have found the body.” I suppose there is something natural about that regret, but I do not greatly sympathize with it. The sea is God’s own—and blessed are they who lie in God’s most sacred sleeping place, where no spade of sexton shall ever disturb their bones! Where can any of us lie better than where “pearls lie deep”? What myriads are there already! When the trumpet of the Resurrection sounds, the sea must give up her dead and myriads will stand upon the waves, as on a sea of glass, to be judged! And full many of them will rise to their eternal thrones from the caverns of the mighty main! God has but to speak it, and though the bodies may have been devoured by fish, or dissolved into their separate atoms by the perpetual beating of the surf, yet when He speaks it, frames shall be refashioned, life shall come back at His call and our dead men shall live, and in their flesh shall they see God, who, before they died, had learned to say, “I know that my Redeemer lives.”

Do not be distressed by the fear of dying at sea. You must die somewhere. Do you know the old story of the man who asked a captain if he was afraid to go to sea? “I am not,” said the mariner, “why should I be?” “Look at the danger,” said the landsman. “How did your father die?” “He died at sea” “How did your grandfather die?” “He was lost at sea.” “And your great-grandfather?” “Yes,” he replied, “I have heard that he, too, was drowned at sea” “Surly then, you are afraid to go to sea?” “No,” said the captain, “I am not. Where did your father die?” “He died in his bed” “And where did your grandfather die?” “He died in his bed.” “And where did your great-grandfather die?” “As far as I know, he also died in his bed.” “And yet you are not afraid to go to bed!” There is good, sound reason in such a view of the matter. We shall not die before our time. Our lives are in the Divine Hands. You may well smile at my tale and I hope you will keep a gleam of that pleasant look for the next time death stares you in the face—and then say to yourself, “Be still, my Heart. If my time has come, I will commit my spirit into the hands of a faithful Creator and feel that if I sink, I shall drop into my Father’s hands, for He holds the waters in the hallow of His hands.” Thus much upon that first point—God made the sea

II. Our second point is, GOD OWNS THE SEA—“The sea is His, for He made it.” He owns it by right of creation. It is not everything that a man makes that is his own. Many tradesmen are occupied in making divers articles which when they have made them, belong to their masters. But that is because the materials are found for them. God made the sea out of nothing—there were no materials ready to His hand to make this world of—His own Omnipotence spoke it into existence! He filled the sea from His own treasury, the liquid stores were His own. There is not in the sea at this moment a single wave that anybody made but God, and all the constituent elements of it were created by Him, and by Him only. Therefore He claims the sea from shore to shore, and who shall question His title? Not only did He own it once, but He owns it now—He has never handed over the ocean to any people or nation! David said, “The sea is His,” and it is still God’s. It always will be His sea!

But the sea is man’s. God evidently meant us to go to sea because when He made man, almost the first thing He said was that He made him to have dominion over the fish of the sea. And I do not see how we can have dominion over the fish of the sea if we never go to sea at all. There are the fish, thousands of miles from the shore, and if no mariner shall ever cross the deep, what dominion can we be said to have over “the fish of the sea and whatever passes through the paths of the seas”? He made man to be a fisherman as well as to be a farmer. He meant him to plow the waves as well as to plow the shore! In fact, our present race all sprang from one whose huge vessel was the cradle of the new race. Man owns the sea but still, the sea is God’s. Man is God’s viceroy, but God is the true King. Man is tenant under God and should pay the quit-rent of reverential gratitude and adoration, for the freehold of the sea remains with the Lord. There may be a victory in India or in Ireland, but India and Ireland are still the Queen’s—and so man may have dominion over the fish of the sea but it is a delegated Sovereignty—the sea is still the Lord’s.

Old ocean does not belong to Neptune, as the heathen used to say. Father Neptune is an idle dream! The idolaters parceled out the various kingdoms among their deities—one should rule the heavens, another the clouds, another the earth and another the sea—but we know that there is only one God. The sea is Jehovah’s—not Neptune’s.

Though we sometimes sing, “Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves,” the words are not true! Jehovah rules the waves—not Britannia! There is a sense in which the patriotic song expresses a great truth—and I have not a word to say against it—but we all know that we may be on board Britannia’s biggest ship of war, but the Union Jack cannot save us in the time of tempest! Jehovah must then interpose and bid the billows sleep. “The sea is His, for He made it.”

I sometimes feel very glad when I look at the sea and think that it belongs to the great and generous God and not to greedy man. Here upon land, every foot of earth is enclosed by somebody and jealously guarded from trespassers. The village had a breezy common upon which a poor man might at least keep a goose—but the great folks could never rest till every inch was put within hedges and made their own. You can scarcely walk anywhere without being met by, “Trespassers, Beware.” Mountains and hills which everybody ought to be allowed to climb without leave, are fenced in and kept from all intruders. Men fight for years over a yard of ground that is my lord’s, and this is my lady’s, and this is copyhold of the manor. “The Heaven, even the Heaven of heavens, is the Lord’s, but the earth has He given to the children of men”—and they scramble for it and divide it among themselves! No such greed can appropriate the sea. The free sea cannot be parceled out, nor hedged, nor ditched, nor walled! It has no lords of the manor, but remains free and unappropriated forever! “The sea is His, for He made it.” According to law, a few miles from the shore the sea belongs to the country which borders on it, but once reach the main ocean and nationalities are forgotten. The sea is neither English nor French, Dutch nor American. No ship is a trespasser there! No one ever thought of impounding stray whales for going out of their owner’s fields. The pastures of the deep are for all fish—they may feed where they will, from shore to shore.

“The sea is His,” and this begets in you a joyous sense of liberty, as though for once you were beyond bounds and, like a sea bird, feared no cage or fowler’s snare. Oh, for a bound from billow to billow of the unpolluted main, where sail of man has never been seen, or voice of blasphemy ever heard! Who can hinder our liberated spirit as it dances on the wave, or dives beneath it? May we always wear that free spirit about us, even in these huddled homes and narrow streets! Let us not be grasping, mean, narrow—let us not hedge in all things unto ourselves, but desire that others may share in our blessings! May we have largeness of heart as the sand which is on the seashore and greatness of love comparable to the immeasurable sea!

“The sea is His.” Then this sentence puts all other claimants out of court. The sea is the Lord’s and, therefore, He ought to be reverenced on it. Hush! Hush! What are you doing, Man? Swearing at God on His own sea! Stop till you get on land—and when you reach the shore, stop till you can find a place where God is not near you, for to swear at Him to His face is madness! Will you insult God on His own sea? No, surely. If the sea is His, you will mind what you are doing. When a man is out in the street, when he wanders about as he pleases, he may often take many liberties. But if he is invited to a friend’s house, he does not like to be to boisterous and noisy, but minds his manners. If any of us were invited to dinner with the Queen, I am sure we should feel quite nervous, and ask of our friends, “Jack, how do you behave when you go into a palace? What is the way of doing it?” You would all be anxious to be proper and well-behaved. On the sea it seems to me that you should be particularly careful of what you say and do for you are on God’s premises! In as much as He can hear you think—mind what you think about! On the sea you are inside God’s House—be holy, then—“for holiness becomes His House forever.” There is the Throne of the Great King and around it is a pavement of crystal! I mean the glassy sea and you sailors should think of yourselves as God’s courtiers—permitted to come very near Him, and to behold more of His Glory than any other men! Oh that you may be led to think of your position in this light!

I wish you would think highly of your honorable calling. When a man thinks that his calling necessitates his being wicked, he is sure to be wicked. But when he judges that he is under obligation to be holy, perhaps he will desire to be so and God’s Grace will help him to be so! Ho, you who do business on God’s own sea—fly away from His royal domain if you resolve to rebel against Him! Do not dare to sin to His face! But where shall you go? If you take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost of the sea you are still within His courts!

There is yet another view of the matter. The sea is the Lord’s and, therefore, I may confess my sin to Him when I am out on the ocean and He will hear me, for He is there! I may weep the tear of penitence and He will see me, for God is there! Out at sea I may cry, “My Father,” and He will hear His child! Brother, you may find Jesus at sea for He was at home on the waves and a companion of seafaring men! The Lake of Galilee was familiar with His voice and saw His answer to the prayer, “Lord, save, or I perish!” The sea around you waits to hear you pray and to see God’s wonders on the deep!

Something calls for a repetition of that, “hush,” which I gave just now, in the thought that “the sea is His,” for God reveals Himself through the sea—therefore gaze with awe! I have not the slightest doubt that many a man has learned much of God on the ocean, although as yet he knows not the Redeemer and His salvation. I wish every sailor would daily read the Bible, which is our chart to Heaven, but many who have neglected that blessed Book, have found lessons of warning, yes, and lessons of hope in the rolling waves. O hear the voice of God in the storm! Be warned as you escape from the jaws of death! Have hope as you cling to the rock! The sea is God’s—take care that when you fly over its hallowed surface, you read Jehovah’s Book, bow before His Throne, trust in His Son and offer continual thanksgiving to Him!

It seems to me that as the sea is God’s, then sailors should be His, too, or they are trespassers. A man feeds his own sheep in his own pastures, and would not God have His own mariners on His own sea? Moreover, if God owns the sea because He made it, He owns you, because He made you, too! You are His creature and by all the rights of Creatorship you belong to Him. He claims you—will you dispute the claim? I would not like to think of you as a blot upon the fair face of the ocean. God is looking over all the waters and seeing the white sails and the smoking funnels that even now are passing from shore to shore. And He is saying, “The sea is all Mine, but those men who breast the storm are not Mine. I preserve them, but they never think of Me. I have sent salvation to them, but they will not hear it. The fish and the bird know their seasons, but man rebels against Me.” I cannot bear to think that it should be so. I long for the day when every ship upon the sea shall be an ark and every sailor a Noah!

What are some of you sailors doing? Why, there are many of you whom I would trust with anything—I would not count my gold, but trust you with my purse—I am so sure that you would bring it back safely. You hate dishonesty and would not tell a lie. You speak out bravely and fear no man, and yet some of you rob God! You pay your debt to everybody most freely, but not to your Maker! You owe Him most, and yet think of Him least! Is not this wrong? See that child? They say he is very good to the servants and to strangers, but he always puts on a scowl when he sees his father, for he cannot stand him. Would you like to be the father of such a child? Yet you are like he. You are capital fellows on board a ship, capital men on shore, too, when you get among your families—and yet toward God you act shamefully! May the Spirit of God lead you to feel that you are wrong—and when you feel it, may you have Grace to tack about and steer for another point!

A little while ago, a vessel picked up a man far out at sea in an open boat. He was unconscious. The oars were lying by his side and he had evidently drifted from off the beach, carried by a current right away from help. I wonder whether any man here is drifting right away—out of sight of land, drifting on and on! Ah, Jack, when you were a boy, you went with your mother to the little chapel in the village. Do you recollect that you were in the Sunday school? You loved to worship with your mother, who is now in Heaven, but you went away from home and you went away from God, too! You have been pretty nearly round the world—do you remember the places where you have landed only to plunge into sin? Oh, you forget, do you? I must tell you, then, that God did not forget and your own conscience does not forget, for the stain is on your soul today. You have drifted, drifted, drifted. How long is it since you read a chapter of the Bible? How long since you bowed your knees in prayer? You have drifted very far out. I wish this full-rigged ship of mine, which has just come within sight of you, might pick you up. At any rate, I hail you from this quarterdeck, and if you are not quite unconscious, I hope you will hear the call. Poor shipmate, we would like to get you up the ship’s side! Some of my crew will be after you in the boats, directly, for there are true hearts here that love to rescue the perishing. If one of them comes alongside, just know that he is a friend and that he comes in the name of Jesus, “mighty to save.” May the Lord Jesus come, Himself and put out His hand to some sinking Peter, and save him from a watery grave! Amen.

I wonder where the training ship, “Atalanta,” now is? Where are the other vessels which have been missed so long? We have reason to fear that they are lost! Fine vessels and yet lost! Hundreds on board and all lost! We cannot bear to think of it. If they are lost, it will be of no use to go after them—the swiftest vessel cannot overtake them and the sharpest lookout will never see them. They are beyond hope. But what a mercy it is that you are not! If it had not been for the mighty hand of God last voyage, you would not only have been lost at sea, my Friend, but lost forever! To be lost at sea, if the soul is safe, is but a small calamity—but to lose the soul is to lose all—it were good for that man that he had never been born! Blessed be God, you are not in Hell yet! You are not shut out from mercy yet! Jesus Christ still flies the mercy-signal and His servant still cries to you, “Come, come, come to Jesus! Come and welcome, come and put your trust in the Savior.” May His gracious Spirit lead you to do so! Remember, wherever you are, on whatever sea you may sail, the sea is His. His Grace reaches to the uttermost. The shipwrecked soul is still within the reach of mercy! If God does but lead it to cry to Him out of the lowest depths, He will hear the voice of supplication!

III. I now invite you to the third and concluding point, “O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND BOW DOWN.” You of the land, and you of the sea, let us together worship the Lord our God! It is no new work for one of us, for our life is spent in worship, but oh, if it is a new thing with any man here, I would gently take him by the hand and say, “Come, Friend, let us worship and bow down, let us do it together. You are a Sinner—so am I. You have no merits and I have none. If ever you are saved, it will be by Grace, alone, and so it will be in my case. Jesus must be your only hope, and He is mine. ‘O come, let us worship.’”

Have you never worshipped God? Then sit still in the pew and do it. Say, “My God, You have made me, teach me how to worship You.” Shall I stop a minute while you ask pardon for Jesus’ sake?

(Pause.)

This is the last thing I have to say. I recollect a man, an old sailor, who had been a great blasphemer. He was a regular old salt, but there was no salt of Divine Grace in him, for he hated religion. He heard the Gospel. The Lord brought him to his knees, broke his heart, gave him deep conviction of sin and afterwards led him to look to Christ and trust Him and find salvation. When this weather-beaten mariner came forward to join the Church, he said, “I am come to get on the register, for I have got a new Owner. I used to carry the black flag at the masthead and there was not a timber in me but what belonged to the devil. I carried many a cargo and sailed over many a sea for him, but now I belong to Jesus from stem to stern, and I want to run up the blood-red flag of Christ, who has bought me for His own. I want you to register me under my new Owner and let me sail with those who belong to Him.” We were glad enough to register him in the Church-Book. The first point is to get the Owner, the Lord Jesus, and then to acknowledge Him before all the world.

You Christian sailors, wherever you go, show your flag! A dear man of God, a captain, was baptized here last Thursday night and he told me that 20 or more of his crew were converted on the last voyage out. He said, “We cannot make Christians of them, but we give them an opportunity every day of hearing the Gospel and, blessed be God, many have found the Savior.” Captains, mind you look to your crews—and don’t have their blood on your skirts through your neglect! If you are not captains, if you have any influence at all, carry the Gospel wherever you go. I believe if you are nothing but a cabin boy you can speak a word for Jesus Christ if you have Jesus Christ in your hearts! And then others will say, “Why, that boy shames us, for he loves the Savior!” Though they may scoff at you and pretend to despise you, it will make a hole in their consciences, depend upon it! If you drop a lighted match down anybody’s neck, he may say it is a small bit of timber and laugh at it, but he will know it is there before long! If you get on fire with the love of God. If you are placed in the company of others, you may be very small and despised, but they will soon discover the heavenly flame! Only you must mind that you are really alight and that the true fire is in your spirit—for an empty profession will only make religion a mockery! God bless you and bless the Society! (A voice—“Amen!”) You said, “Amen.” Well, there is to be a collection and so I hope you will carry out your amen in a practical way and bless the Society by contributing to it as you are able.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1551 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TODAY! TODAY! TODAY!  
NO. 1551

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 1, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” Psalm 95:7, 8.**

THIS Psalm is a burst of praise. It resounds with the joyful noise of hearty thanksgiving unto Jehovah and yet before it closes you hear the solemn tones of exhortation to men to hearken to the voice of their God. Alas that it should be true, but true it is, that the Canaanite still dwells in the midst of’ Israel! In every gathering of the faithful there is a mixture of those who know not the ways of God. When Israel came out of Egypt, a mixed multitude came forth with the people of God—that mixed multitude did them great damage and often brought them under great sin and consequent sorrow, but they were always there. And they are always here, too, in the Church and around it, dishonoring us by their evil behavior. Not only in the great congregations, but even in little gatherings of Believers we meet with the unworthy ones. Scarcely are 12 met together without a Judas in the midst of them.

Thus it comes to pass that in our loudest praises there is always a measure of discord and when we have lauded the Most High with our best hallelujahs we shall be called upon to listen, in humble silence, to His warning voice addressed to the unbelieving and disobedient among us. Such characters are here this morning and it is well for us to know the fact. It is well for us to examine ourselves, whether we belong to this class and whether the words before us may not be addressed to ourselves—“If you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” But supposing us to have listened to the Lord and to have found peace like a river in consequence, it is well for us to think of those who are sitting side by side with us who are living in unbelief, that we may bless God the more for distinguishing Grace manifested to ourselves and that we may offer our earnest prayers for them all through the service that God may bring them to His feet and save them by His Grace.

In the spirit of hearty love to men’s souls I shall try to preach. And in that spirit I beg of you to hear the Word of God today. If saints are thus moved to pity sinners and to pray for them, the Holy Spirit will bless the Word and it will be quick and powerful to search out the thoughts of men’s hearts and awaken them from their indifference to the voice of God. He is a happy minister who, while he preaches, is surrounded by a praying people! Joshua in the plain is sure of the victory while Moses pleads upon the mountain with God! Borne up by your supplications, I advance to an earnest conflict with the hard hearts of the unsaved. Yet the sermon will not be altogether and only for the unbelieving, for, alas, even in God’s people there is a measure of unbelief and deafness of ear. Even God’s children do not hear their Father’s voice so readily as they should!

We are sometimes so taken up with other things that God speaks again and again and we do not regard Him. The still small voice of His love is too apt to be altogether unheeded while the thunders of this world’s traffic fill our ears. Take heed, therefore, Brothers and Sisters, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Lest this should be the case, let each of us take home to himself so much of what shall be spoken as may fairly be applicable to himself and let us all hear God saying to us, even to us, “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation.”

Let us come at once to the text. The simple plan of our speaking this morning shall at once be laid before you. We have here, first, a time specified—the Holy Spirit says, “Today.” Secondly, a voice to be regarded—“If you will hear His voice.” And then, thirdly, an evil to be dreaded, against which we are warned—“harden not your heart.” There is a sad tendency in man to harden his heart even when God speaks and, therefore, the Holy Spirit says to us, “Harden not your heart, as in the provocation.”

I. First, then, THE TIME SPECIFIED—“Today if you will hear His voice.” This is the uniform time and tense of the Holy Spirit’s exhortations. He says nothing about tomorrow, except to forbid our boasting of it, since we know not what a day shall bring forth. All His instructions are set to the time and tune of “Today, today, today.” He speaks of pressing and immediate necessities requiring to be supplied “today” and of urgent duties which must be fulfilled “today.” He says, “Consecrate yourselves, today, to the Lord.” “I command you this thing today.” “Son, go work today in my vineyard.” Therefore, “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” “Today” is a time of obligation. Every man is under a present necessity as a subject of God to obey his Lord, today, and having rebelled against his God, every sinner is under law to repent of sin today!

“Repent you therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,” is the cry of Scripture to everyone who has sinned against the Most High (Acts 3:19). What if I should repent tomorrow, yet it will be a sin to remain impenitent today. What if I should believe in Christ next year, yet will it be a heinous offense to have been an unbeliever this year. I have no more right to continue to disobey than I ever had to disobey at all! When the Law of God has been broken, it is still binding and every fresh offense against it is reckoned to our charge. We are bound to confess and forsake sin now. I met with a striking sentence in the works of William Mason which is well worthy to be written among your memoranda—“Every day of delay leaves a day more to repent of and a day less to repent in.”

What if this day shall be the last I live? Shall it be spent in refusing to hear the Word of my Maker? Shall my last breath be spent in rejecting my Savior? God forbid! I see that I am bound as His creature to obey Him and as His sinful creature to seek pardon of Him. Help me, therefore, Blessed Spirit, to attend to these things this day without delay. Remember, also, that today is a time of opportunity. There is, this day, set before us an open door of approach to God! This is a very favored day, for it is the Lord’s Day, the day of rest, consecrated to works of Grace. Today our Lord Jesus rose and left the dead that He might declare the justification of His people.  
This is a day of good tidings, Beloved! I pray you seize the golden moments. On what better day can you seek the Lord than on that day which He has hedged about and set apart that you might spend it in His love? Is it not our Sabbath? No day can be more fit for ceasing from your own works that you may rest in the work of Christ. Is it not the first day of the week? This day creating work began—why should not the new creation begin in you at this good hour? Today the fiat of the Lord went forth and there was light. O for that fiat to be heard within your souls that you might have the Light of God!

It is a day of Grace today, a day of Gospel preaching, a day of an open Bible! It is a day of promises, a day in which the Spirit of God comes to work with men, a day in which Jesus Christ is set forth evidently crucified among you! It is a day in which the Mercy Seat is approachable, a day in which justice is God’s strange work, but in which mercy is His joyful occupation! These are days which kings and Prophets waited for and saw not—blessed days when Mercy keeps open house for all hungry souls and when whoever will, may come and him that comes shall in no wise be cast out! You cannot have a better time for coming to Christ than the season prescribed in the text—namely, “TODAY!” With some of you it is a time of choice opportunity, for you are in good health and possess the powers of clear connected thought.

How much better is such a day than the gloomy period when you will lie sick and near to death! That poor brain will be distracted with a thousand cares and fears—how will you, then, be able to grasp the solemn Truths of Revelation for the first time? It is ill to be setting your house in order at the moment you are leaving it! You may have enough to do even to draw your breath, while those who watch you will need to wipe the clammy sweat from your brow—it will be a poor time for these weighty matters then! It may be you will be low, or faint, or delirious and it will be hard to be without God then. Many have said to me, when I have seen them dying, “If I had a Christ to find now what would I do?” Do avail yourselves, dear Hearers, of the time when your reason is yet upon its hinges and the windows of your minds can yet admit the Light of God. Seek the Lord while yet your health is continued to you! The day of strength should not be wasted, nor should our youth be thrown away, but while vigor lasts we should press into the Kingdom. Today, then, listen, for today is an opportune time!

Remember, also, that you are sitting in the place where God has saved thousands of souls and you are listening to one who, though in himself is utterly unworthy, God has used for bringing many to Himself. Perhaps you have come from some distant part of the country where the preaching has not been a power to your soul. The very change and novelty of the minister’s voice may be helpful to you and you may, this day, be more inclined to attend to the Gospel than you have been on other occasions. It is, therefore, a time of opportunity! Hoist sail while the wind blows! Men say, “Make hay while the sun shines,” and I say the same to you! While the rain of Grace is falling, set your souls under the sacred shower. He who goes into a battle and wishes to be wounded will soon meet with a wound and he who wishes the Truth of God to lay him low will not be long untouched by it.

Everything around seems, today, agreed to help the soul that will, at once, come to Jesus! The day, the place, the people, the preacher—all make it a time of opportunity to many of you! Remember how Paul tells us plainly that it is a time limited. He says “Again He limits a certain day, saying in David, today if you will hear His voice.” Today will not last forever—a day is but a day. When days are longest, shadows fall, at last, and night comes on. The longest life soon wanes into the evening of old age and old age hastens to the sunset of the tomb. It is a limited day! A day, but only a day. How very limited life is in many instances! How many are born but never reach complete manhood! How many pass away before they have fulfilled one half the allotted age of man! How many lives are extinguished as a candle is suddenly blown out. This thought ought to make us listen to the Divine voice which cries—“Today!” “Today!”

The thought of death has often brought men to decision. They tell us in the old histories that Peter Waldo, a certain eminent merchant, had lived a thoughtless, careless life, but as he walked the streets of Lyons, his friend, who was apparently in good health, fell dead at his side and Waldo at once sought the Lord, believed the Gospel and preached it to others. According to certain writers he became the founder of that wonderful people, the Waldensians, who maintained the Truth of God through many a century when the whole earth was covered with Papal darkness. Oh that some of you would become so conscious of your own frailty as to perceive that you are standing on the brink of everlasting woe—and thus may you be moved to seek your God at once and find your Savior today.

Reflections upon death have often driven men to Christ and so have worked life in them by the blessing of the Holy Spirit. In a book entitled, “Wonders of Grace,” by a Primitive Methodist minister, I met with a story which pleased me much. A young man in Berlin who was sick with fever was attended lovingly by a young doctor who was his bosom friend. He lived in apartments. His careful friend ordered him to be moved into the darkest part of the room, because the sunlight was too much for his eyes. It was an amazing Providence that the bed should be pushed close against the wall which was only a thin partition separating the apartment from the room in which lived the landlord of the house.

While the sick man lay there, possibly with his mind somewhat wandering in the fever, he was astonished to hear a voice whisper in his own tongue a verse which may be translated thus—

*“Today you live, yet  
Today turn you to God,  
For before tomorrow comes  
You may be with the dead.”*

Some other words followed which he did not hear so well, but presently in a louder voice he heard the words repeated*—  
“Today you live, yet  
Today turn you to God,  
For before tomorrow comes  
You may be with the dead.”*

Over and over again those same words were whispered or spoken close to the spot where he was lying. It so impressed him that when his young friend, the physician, asked him how he was, he looked at him earnestly and replied*—*

*“Today you live, yet  
Today turn you to God,  
For before tomorrow comes  
You may be with the dead.”*

The physician took his hand and said, “Your pulse is better, but if it were not for that I should think you worse, for you are evidently raving.” To this he received no answer but a repetition of the lines. He could get nothing out of his patient but that verse, spoken with an awe-struck look and thrilling voice. The young physician went home thoughtful and when he came next time he found his friend much better, sitting up in bed, reading the Scriptures. The two sought and found the Savior, for those warning words had drawn them across the boundary line and made them decide for God and for His Christ!

How came the lines to have thus sounded in the sick man’s ears? Was it a dream? Did an angel pronounce the warning? No, it was a little boy who had failed to repeat his lesson to his father and had been made to stand in the corner, with his face to the wall, till he knew the lines. He was saying his task over and over and over to himself, in order to fix it on his memory and God was using his voice through the partition to bring a heart to Himself! How various are the methods of mercy! Dear Hearer, there may be something quite as odd and yet as ordinary about your being here this morning—some simple circumstance may have stranded you on these shores—where Divine Love waits to bless you. You are not in the place where you usually attend—perhaps you thought it too far to go on such a wet day and you have turned in to worship nearer home—may God overrule it for your eternal good!

May the Lord impress you with the fact that the day of Grace is limited! Mark well the Truth of God that today is the only time that any man has and, therefore, he had need be up and doing—

*“Our time is all today, today,  
The same, though changed and while it flies, With still small voice the moments say, ‘Today, today, be wise, be wise!’”*

A word, however, of encouragement before we leave this point—it is a time of promise, for when God says to a man, Come to Me at such a time, He, by that very word makes an engagement to meet him! One asked me this morning, “When can I call upon you?” I said, “At ten o’clock next Tuesday.” Of course I shall then be ready to receive him if nothing unforeseen prevents. I should not have made the appointment for him to come if I had meant to refuse him when he comes! And when God says, “Hear My voice today,” He means that He will meet you and speak with you today!

David said to Solomon, “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” This is true of you, dear Hearer, if you will seek Him today. He has made no appointment with you to meet with you tomorrow, but He has engaged to speak with you today, if you will hear His voice. Never shall one wait and say, like young Samuel, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears,” without God’s speaking in words of love before long. There is so much to encourage in the text that I would gladly hope and pray that many of my dear hearers who have never sought the Lord will, at this moment, cry, “The time past shall suffice me to have worked the will of the flesh and now today let others do as they will, as for me and my house we will serve the Lord and seek His face.”

II. Secondly, let us think of THE VOICE TO BE REGARDED. “Today if you will hear His voice.” Place the emphasis upon the word HIS. Reading the Psalm, as we have done, we could not help noticing that its first verses are the voice of the Church of God—“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms.” Throughout the first seven verses we have the voice of God’s people pleading with all that are mingled with them to bow in joyful, humble, believing worship before the Most High. Shall not these pleas influence our minds? Surely attention should be paid to the voices of godly men and women!

The entreaties of pious parents, teachers, relatives and friends ought not to fall to the ground. When the bride says “Come,” her voice is worthy of your attention, especially when you remember that the Spirit speaks in her. We, who serve God, implore you to have regard to our entreaties. When we unselfishly love you as we love our own souls and long for your salvation, you ought to regard our earnestness. When you know that our hearts break at the thought of your being lost and that we would give our eyes if we might but give eyes to you which with you should see Jesus, there ought to be some power about our love and you should give earnest heed to our entreaties! I thank God there often is a force in the love of Believers to their friends, but if in our case there is none, if you think our appeals too insignificant, yet I beseech you listen to the voice of God, for surely His voice may not be slighted!

Today hear His voice, for, indeed, the Gospel is His voice! Is not the Bible His book? Are not the Truths which we preach, Truths of God which He has revealed? Is not the plan of salvation of His own ordaining? Is not Christ the unspeakable gift of His own giving? Is not pardon according to His promise? Therefore, though the preacher will be quite willing that you should pour contempt upon him, he implores you not to do despite to his Master. Despise not God! Reject not Christ! “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” Remember that the voice of God is the voice of authority. God has a right to speak to you—shall the creature refuse to hear the Creator? Shall those who are nourished and fed by Him turn a deaf ear to the Preserver of men? When He says, “today,” who among us shall dare to say that he will not listen today, but by-and-by?

It is disobedience on the part of a child when he says to his father “I will not obey you today.” He might as well say “I will disobey you,” for that is what he means. If you had a summons from the court to attend at such an hour, would you send a message to say that it was not convenient, but you would attend at your own pleasure? If the Queen were to command you into her presence at such an hour, I guarantee that you would be there before the time rather than after it! It is an insult to superiors when we take no notice of their appointed times, but keep them waiting our will and pleasure. The Lord has a right to fix His own time for doing deeds of Grace and favor. He is giving away His free mercy to undeserving subjects and if He says, “I will open the gates today and I will answer prayer today,” it would be the height of impertinence if we reply, “You must wait my time. Go Your way. When I have a more convenient season I will send for You.”

Is God to wait as a lackey upon you? You deserve His wrath—will you slight His love? He speaks in amazing tenderness—will you exhibit astounding hardness? Be not so daring, so profane, so cruel as to talk of delay when the Divine message lays such stress on your immediate attention, saying, “Today if you will hear His voice.” If this strain should not affect the conscience, let me try another. The voice here spoken of is the voice of Love. How wooing are its tones! The Lord in Holy Scripture speaks of mercy and of pardon bought with blood—the blood of His dear Son! O Man, He calls you to Him, not that He may slay you, but that He may save you! He does not summon you to a prison, but He invites you to a banquet! God speaks not as judge, but as father! Not as from Sinai, but from Calvary—“Come, now, and let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

Do not be cruel to almighty Love! Be not ungenerous to eternal pity! When the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you will hear His voice,” oh, I pray you, hear, and your soul shall live and He will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David! Personally, I can resist harshness, but love subdues me. I hope that you are cast in even a softer mold than I am. Even human love is hard to resist, but, oh, the love of God, who can withstand it? Base is the spirit that can harden itself against the boundless love of God in Christ Jesus! Remember, too, that this is the voice of power. This is a sweet thought for those of you who are without strength. You will, perhaps, say, “I cannot turn to God,” but He can turn you! You lament that you cannot feel as you would wish—He can give you every gracious feeling!

God’s voice, alone, created the world! He spoke the universe out of

 nothing and when darkness enwrapped it, He said, “Light be,” and light was! He who spoke thus in Nature can thus speak in Grace and work salvation in you. The text warns you against hardening your heart and if you will listen to the voice of God it will soften your heart. “His voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon; His voice makes the hinds to calve.” So can His voice break your hard heart and cause your hesitating spirit to decide. Only yield to it! Yield to it now! The day may come when you will never hear it again. It is a pitiful story I once heard told of an old man sitting alone with his little grandchild. Taking the little child on his knee, he said, “My boy, seek the Lord betimes; seek Him now.”

“Grandpa,” he said, “have you sought Him?” “No, child,” he said, “no.” “But, Grandpa, should you not seek Him?” The old man shook his head and sadly answered, “I would, child, but my heart is hard. My heart is hard. There was a time”—and then the old man wept. Oh, if such an old man is here, I say to him, there was a time and there is a time, for even now, though your heart is hard, is there not the promise, “I will take away the heart of stone out of their flesh and I will give them a heart of flesh”? Old Man, the Holy Spirit says still, “Today, today,” and He that says, “today” can make today for you a day of tenderness and melting till you will be no longer like a stone! How often have I felt the power of that verse—

*“Your mercy is more than a match for my heart, Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart; Dissolved by Your goodness, I fall to the ground, And weep to the praise of the mercy I’ve found.”*

The Lord put that new song into all your mouths!

The voice of God, let me add, now, to close this point, ought to be heard because it is a pledging voice. God, by calling you, pledges Himself that He will hear you if you come. When He says to you, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?” He pledges Himself that you shall not die if you turn to Him. When He says, “Seek you the Lord while He may be found,” He does, as it were, covenant that He will be found of you. Listen, then, to His promising voice, His cheering voice! It will cast all unbelieving fear out of you and drive away Satan better than David’s harp drove the evil spirit out of Saul. God help you to do so. The voice of God should be easy to hear, for “the voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness. The Lord of Glory thunders.”

All Nature bows before the roll of His voice. Full often during this week, above the roar of the sea, or the clamor of traffic in the street, peal on peal of the voice of God was heard till the mountains trembled to their foundations and the heavens were astonished. What deafness must sin have caused to man that he cannot hear the voice of God! Oh, be willing to let that voice penetrate your hearts—it will do so if you are but willing that it should. May God work in you to will of His good pleasure. I fear that some of you are so very busy that you will not reserve your ears for God even for half an hour. You are too much taken up with the discord of the world to heed the harmony of Heaven.

Diodorus Siculus says that in Sicily the herbs are sometimes so odoriferous and in certain places there are such thick beds of them, that when hounds pass through them they lose the scent. I fear that in some men’s lives there are so many vanities, so much love of the world, so many poisonous flowers, in fact, that they lose scent of things eternal, if they ever had any. Yet what will it profit you if you gain the world and lose your souls? You will not gain the world in business in these dull times, profits are small now—you will not gain a world, will you? No, nor half a world, nor even a moderate fortune. But whatever your gain is, look at it and judge if it is not a poor compensation for a lost Heaven, a lost eternity, a lost soul. If you lose your soul you have lost all!

A bankrupt may begin again if it is but bankruptcy of this world’s goods, but what can he do who is bankrupt for eternity and can never start anew? Oh, you that never think of this, if you never have another warning, let this come home to you! You must die, Sirs! You must leave your moneys and properties, your shops and your warehouses. You of smaller estate must leave your cozy cottage or your comfortable room and all the little treasures of home! And what will your naked spirit do if it has no resting place beyond the skies? Must it flit forever over a shoreless deluge of woe and find no rest for the sole of its feet?

Hearken and consider. “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” Thus says the Lord, “Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear and your soul shall live.” May the Lord bless you, now, and may His Spirit lead you to hear, to believe, to obey.

III. Now comes our third point and as time presses we must speak in condensed words of THE EVIL TO BE DREADED. “Harden not your hearts”—there is really no need—they are hard enough already. “Harden not your hearts”—there is no excuse, for why should you resist love? “Harden not your hearts”—there can be no good in it—a man is less a man in proportion to his loss of tenderness of heart. Sensibility is, in many aspects, a high possession. Sensibility of the affections and the heart is rather to be cultivated than lessened, for it may turn out to be the beginning of Grace. “Harden not your hearts”—you cannot soften them, but you can harden them!

There is an awful power for evil about every man. Do not try how far it will carry you. To do good, man needs the help of Grace, but to do evil he needs no aid and if he did, the devil is there to lend it to him right speedily. “Harden not your hearts,” for this will be your ruin—it is the suicide of your soul, for first, it will be a serious evil if you do. To harden the heart in this case is to harden it against God. The voice is that of the Lord of Hosts. Be astonished, O heavens! God is speaking in boundless Grace and the man is hardening his heart in the Presence of God! Under the sound of Love’s entreaties. Within earshot of Mercy’s imploring tones, the sinner is hardening his heart! Sad work, to harden one’s heart against one’s own welfare! Shall any man do this and go unpunished? What do you think?

He hardens his heart willfully. He feels some drawings to good things and he pulls back. Grace leads and the man stands aside with resolve not to follow. Have you ever done that, my Hearer? Did you ever say, “It will not do,” and put down the rising emotion? Did you ever, when reading a good book, or at a deathbed side, or when hearing an earnest sermon, do violence to your better self? Take care, take care! They will be lost, indeed, who of set purpose wander from the right path! O do not perish out of spite to love. Some have resisted conscience frequently—they find it hard to go to Hell and yet they push on.

Many of the more dissolute kind slide downward from vice to vice! They perform a horrible descent, as down a mountain of ice—they give themselves up to iniquity and away they go to Hell! Woe unto such! Others of us have been highly favored, for across our way God has, as it were, cast felled trees and iron chains to stop our downward career. If you do get lost, some of you will have to wade through your mother’s tears and leap over your father’s prayers and your minister’s entreaties. You will have to force a passage through the warnings of godly people and the examples of pious relatives. Why this effort to destroy your own souls? Why so desperately set on self-destruction? It must be a gigantic evil for a man to do this and continue to do it.

Will you do it again this morning? Are you resolved to be lost? If so, then there is one thing I would like you to do and that is to put it in writing. I would, daring as it seems, challenge you to write out your covenant with Hell! I would have you look yourself in the face and say, “I have surrendered myself to a life of sin and I am resolved to take the consequences and to die an enemy to God.” If you will put that in black and white I feel persuaded you will stand back from it and say, “It must not be.” But you answer, “No, I could not write it.” Then why do it? Perhaps this morning one more obstinate fit will end all our hope of you. One more holding of conscience by the throat until it turns black in the face with your grip may be the final action that shall decide your future and you will never be troubled again by compunction or conviction. Ah me, if it should come to this—that you will, from now on, glide down, without a jerk, into the bottomless pit! God forbid it! Oh Almighty Spirit, suffer it not to be so with any here!

To harden the heart is a great evil. And it is a greater sin, let me say next, in some than in others, for the Scripture quotes the instance of Israel. The Holy Spirit says, “As in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me and saw My works 40 years.” Some of you are the highly privileged as compared with others. Look at the multitudes that live in our back streets and courts and alleys who never heard the Gospel, were never trained to go to the House of Prayer and who live and die ignorant of it! How much better your lot! Many of you cannot remember when you first came to a place of worship. You were brought here when you were children. You know the Gospel thoroughly, though you know it not in your hearts—what guilt must be yours to sin against such Light of God and such special advantages!

Some of you have often been warned. You have frequently twisted about on those seats most uneasily. You have gone home and you could not eat. You have felt you must turn, but you have not done so! You are as careless as ever. “He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.” Certain of you have also been chastened—you have had a great deal of trouble—you have lost your dearest friend, or you have been sick and been forced to look into eternity and see how dark it is. On your weary bed you moaned in spirit

*—*

*“Dark is all the world before me,*

*Darker, yet, eternity.”*  
Yet affliction has had no good effect upon you. “Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more.” Already you are as ill as you can be! The whole head is sick with sorrow and the whole heart faint with grief! You have bruises and sores as the result of God’s chastening. Will you revolt more and more? Will you still offend?

Yes, and on the other hand, some of you have been greatly indulged by God—you have all that heart could wish. He has prospered you in business beyond your expectation. He has made you happy in your wife and in your children. He has set a hedge about you and all that you have and yet you are not His. Oh, how can you stand out against Love when she multiplies her favors? I pray and beseech you, by the love of our dear God, treat Him not so ill, but confess your fault and seek His face! I know some, too, who have had hard struggles of conscience and are having them now. Which way they will turn I know not. May God cast the weight of time into the scale and decide them for Heaven! Perhaps I am even speaking to some who have made a profession of religion but do not really know the power of it in their own hearts. They are acting very inconsistently with it and doing much to dishonor the name of Christ. They made vows in Baptism wherein they declared that they were buried with Christ—let them hear His voice and hearken to Him before the day of Grace shall close!

I must beg your further attention a minute while I say that this great sin, this dreadful sin, can be committed in a great many ways. Only one thing can soften the heart and that is the blood of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit—but 50 things can harden the heart! I shall tell you what others do, but I beseech you not to emulate them—“Harden not your hearts.” Some harden their hearts by a resolution not to feel—they set their faces like flints and resolve to shake off the Word of God. I remember preaching, once, when my host disappeared about the middle of the sermon and I noticed that a friend who had traveled there with me disappeared, too. Afterwards I found out the reason. I said, “What made So-and-So go out?” He said, “I guessed what it was and I went after him and he said to me, ‘Mr. Spurgeon handles me like a piece of India rubber and shapes me as he likes. If I stay in there I shall be converted and that will never do and, therefore, I slipped out.’”

Ah me, many fly from their best Friend! While they are plastic they are afraid of being cast into the right mold! Some of you are very much like plaster of Paris, or other cement which will take any shape while it is soft, but oh, how quick it sets and there is no altering it! If you are somewhat affected this morning, do not resist the feeling, but give the full assent and consent of your heart to it. Who knows, you may now be saved! Perhaps if you are not molded while I am preaching, on the way home the plaster will set, hard as a rock, and your shape will be fixed for eternity! Many harden their hearts by delay, by not yielding today, by wishing to wait. Hundreds harden their hearts by pretended doubts, by making foolish criticisms and caviling remarks. They talk about the speaker’s mode of utterance and they get their conscience quiet by remembering a false pronunciation or an ungrammatical sentence! Or else they say, “We cannot be sure of it; Professor Wiseman says differently.”

Ah, yes. But if infidel professors are cast into Hell, their learned observations will not comfort you when you perish in their company! Look to your own souls and let the professors see to theirs. Some of these literary and scientific men will have a great deal to answer for—they gain their eminence by daring to say presumptuous words which better men tremble to hear—but unbelieving souls welcome their wickedness. I have small respect for these advocates of Satan, these decoys of the Destroyer. I charge you, do not pretend to be unbelievers if you are not, nor invent doubts for the mere sake of pacifying your consciences! Too many silence their consciences by getting into evil company and by running into silly amusements, all intended to kill time and prevent thought upon Divine things.

A number of people harden their hearts by indulging a favorite sin. There is a man here who knows the Gospel well and I thought that he was saved, but he loves the intoxicating cup. He drinks every now and then till he is drunk and that one sin is destroying him, though in other respects he is a fine fellow. As sure as he lives, he will commit that folly once too often and perish miserably. When he is sober, he knows his wickedness as well as any man and even weeps over it. But I give very little for his tears, now, since they have flowed so many times that we cannot believe in their sincerity. His repentance dries as soon as his handkerchief. Oh that God would create sincerity in him and make his heart weep instead of his eyes! Darling sins are sure destroyers. We must give up sin, or give up hope of Heaven.

John Bunyan, in his, “Holy War,” describes “Sweet-Sin Hold” as a favorite fortress of Satan, which long held out against Prince Immanuel. Oh that we could raze it to the ground! My Hearer, will you have your sin and go to Hell, or will you leave your sin and go to Heaven? You can not take sin with you into God’s rest, neither can you be Satan’s darling and God’s favorite! Grace will not permit any sin to be loved. He who loves sin, hates God. I cannot go into further detail, but, oh, how many things may be used to harden the heart! This sin will bring with it the most fearful consequences. Harden not your heart, for by such conduct the last opportunity of entering into the Divine rest may pass away. “He swore in His wrath, They shall not enter into My rest!”

You wish to rest at last. You long to rest even now. But it cannot be till you yield to God. You are not at peace, now, and you never will be if you harden your hearts. God is gently drawing some of you this morning. I can feel that He is doing so. I have deep sympathy with you. I know how you are feeling—you want to get alone and fall down on your knees to pray. Pray now! Cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” in the pew, at once! You do not need to wait to get home. May God the Holy Spirit lead you to yield your heart to Jesus Christ at this very time, for, if not, there will surely come, one of these days, a last time in which you will feel and you will, after that, be given up to a conscience seared as with a hot iron, never to feel again!

Think in what plight you will be when you come to die without Christ! How would you like to die like Queen Elizabeth, of whom history tells us that she would not go to bed—she would have cushions on the floor—for if she went to bed she would die and she could not bear the thought! This was her frequent cry, “Call time again! Call time again! Call time again! A world of wealth for an inch of time! Call time again!” Her majesty, whom you have seen decked out with all her ruffles and silks and the like, all haggard and in dishabille upon the ground, shrieked out, “Call time again! A world of wealth for an inch of time!”

May God grant that such may never be your lot, for if you so die—there is a something after death still more awful! I will say but little on that alarming theme, but put it in one verse as I learned it when a child and as I believed it after many an anxious thought. Hear the Truth of God, tremble and turn unto the Lord!—

*“There is a dreadful Hell,  
And everlasting pains,  
Where sinners must with devils dwell In darkness, fire and chains.”*

Escape for your life! Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart!  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE NEW SONG AND THE OLD STORY  
NO. 2850

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1903. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people.”  
Psalm 96:1-3.**

THERE are mighty passions of the human soul which seek vent and can get no relief until they find it in expression. Grief, acute, but silent, has often destroyed the mind because it has not been able to weep itself away in tears. The glow of passion, fond of enterprise and full of enthusiasm, has often seemed to tear the very fabric of manhood when unable either to attain its end or to utter its strong desires. So it is in true religion. It not only lays hold upon our intellectual nature with appeals to our judgment and our understanding, but, at the same time, it engages our affections, brings our passions into play and fires them with a holy zeal, producing a mighty furor, so that, when this spell is on a man, and the Spirit of God thoroughly possesses him, he must express his vehement emotions.

Some professors of religion are ingenious enough to conceal whatever Grace they possess. Little enough they have, I guarantee you, or it would soon be discovered. Have you never seen the brooks that were known to come down the hillsides filled up with stones through the greater part of the summer? You wonder whether there is any streamlet there at all. You may go and search among the rounded stones and scarcely find a trace of water. How different after the snows have melted, or the mists upon the mountain’s brows have turned to showers! Then the water comes rushing down like a mighty torrent, nor is there any question about its being a genuine stream. It shows itself as it rolls the great stones along, perhaps breaking down the banks and overflowing the country!

And so there is a religion—a poor, miserable, ordinary Christianity which is not worth the name it bears, that can hide itself—but vital godliness must assert itself. It must speak plainly, it must act vigorously, it must appear conspicuously. The Cross reveals the hearts of men—it unveils their true character. Till the Cross was set up, Joseph of Arimathaea was scarcely known to be a disciple. And Nicodemus continued to do habitually what he once did literally—resort to Jesus by night. Openly he remained in the Sanhedrim, though secretly he was a profound admirer of the great Redeemer. But when the Cross was lifted up, Joseph went boldly in, with senatorial authority, and obtained the body of Jesus for burial—and Nicodemus came out with well-timed liberality to provide his hundred pounds of spices and his fair white linen. Thus the Cross reveals the thoughts of many hearts!

If you have real Grace and true love to Jesus in your soul, you will need some way of expressing yourselves. Our purpose, therefore, is now to suggest to you two modes of expressing your consecration to God and your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. These two methods are to sing about and to talk about the good things the Lord has done for you and the great things He has made known to you. Let sacred song take the lead—“O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name.” Then let gracious discourse follow— be it in public sermons or in private conversations—“Show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.”

I. We begin with THE VOICE OF MELODY.  
All you who love the Lord, give vent to your heart’s emotion by holy song and take care that it is sung to the Lord, alone. What a noble instrument the human voice is! What a compass it has! Its low, soft whispers—how they can hold us spellbound! Its full volume, as it peals forth like thunder—how it can startle and produce dismay! What profanity, then, to use such an instrument in the service of sin! Is not our tongue the glory of our frame? Had I no conscientious objection to instrumental music in worship, I would still, I think, be compelled to admit that all the instruments that were ever devised by men, however sweetly attuned, are harsh and grating compared with the unparalleled sweetness of the human voice. When it is naturally, melodious and skillfully trained, (and every true worshipper should be zealous to dedicate his richest talent and his highest acquirement to this sacred service), there can be no music under Heaven that can equal the combination of voices which belong to men, women and children whose hearts really love the Savior! So sweet, so enchanting is the melody of song, that, surely, its best efforts should not be put forth to celebrate martial victories or national jubilations, much less should it lend its potent charm to anything that is trivial or lascivious. By sacred right, its highest beauties should be consecrated to Jehovah! If you can sing, sing the songs of Zion! If God has gifted you with a sweet, liquid voice, be sure and use it to render homage unto Him who cried out for you upon the Cross, “It is finished!” “Sing unto the Lord.”  
How much public singing, even in the House of God, is of no account! How little of it is singing unto the Lord! Does not the conscience of full many among you bear witness that you sing a hymn because others are singing it? You go right straight through with it by a kind of mechanical action. You cannot pretend that you are singing unto the Lord! He is not in all your thoughts. Have you not been at places of worship where there is a trained choir evidently singing to the congregation? Tunes and tones are alike arranged for popular effect. There is an artistic appeal to human passions. Harmony is attended to—homage is neglected. That is not what God approves of. I remember a criticism upon a certain minister’s prayers. It was reported, in the newspaper, that he uttered the finest prayer that had ever been offered to a Boston audience! I am afraid there is a good deal of vocal and instrumental music of the same species. It may be the finest praise ever offered to a congregation, but, surely, that is not what we come together for! If you need the sensual gratification of music’s melting, mystic sound, let me commend to you the concert room—there you will get the enchanting ravishment—but when you come to the House of God, let it be to “sing unto the Lord.” As you stand up to sing, there should be a fixed intent of the soul, a positive volition of the mind, an absolute determination of the heart that all the flame which kindles in your breast—and all the melody that breaks from your tongue—and all the sacred swell of grateful song shall be unto the Lord, and unto the Lord, alone.  
And if you would sing unto the Lord, let me recommend you to flavor your mouth with the Gospel doctrines which savor most of Grace unmerited and free. Any other form of theology would tempt us, more or less, to chant the praise of men. Gratitude has full play when we come to know that salvation is of the Lord, alone, and that mercy is Divinely free. He who has once heard the echo of that awful thunder, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” will learn to rejoice with trembling, to sing with deep feeling and to adore, with lowliest reverence, the great Supreme to whom might and majesty belong, and from whom Grace and goodness flow! Human counsels and conceits sink into insignificance, for thoughts of loving kindness and deeds of renown belong unto the Lord alone!  
Kindly glance your eyes down the Psalm from which our text is taken and note how the exhortation to sing is given three times. I draw no absolute inference from this peculiar construction, but, to say the least, it is remarkable that the number three is so continually employed. Further down in the same Psalm it is written, “Give unto the Lord,” “Give unto the Lord,” “Give unto the Lord,” three times. Is there not here some kind of allusion to the wondrous Doctrine of the Trinity? At any rate, I boldly use the threefold cord to express the homage with which it behooves us to adore the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As for Unitarianism, it is a religion of units and I suppose it always will be. There is no danger of its ever spreading very widely. It is cold as a moonlight night, though scarcely as clear. It has not enough of power in it to fire men’s hearts to laud and magnify the Lord. It produces, now and then, a hymn, but it cannot kindle the passions of men to sing it with fervor and devout enthusiasm. Certainly, it cannot gather a crowd of grateful people, who will make a joyful noise unto the Lord and with all their heart and voice shout the chorus of gratitude. O Beloved, I beseech you to let your souls have vent in praise! Sing, often, such a verse as this—  
*“Blessed be the Father and His love,  
To whose celestial source we owe  
Rivers of endless joy above,  
And rills of comfort here below.”*  
Praise the God of Glory who loved you before the foundation of the world! Praise the God of Grace who called you when you sought Him not. Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again unto a lively hope—our Heavenly Father who provides for us, educates us, instructs us, leads and guides us, and will bring us, by-and-by, to the many mansions in His own house.  
Sing you also unto the Son. Never fail to adore the Son of God who left the royalties of Heaven to bear the indignities of earth. Adore the Lamb slain! Kneel at the foot of the Cross and praise each wound, and magnify the Immortal who became mortal for our sakes—  
*“Glory to You, great Son of God!  
From whose dear wounded body rolls  
A precious stream of vital blood  
Pardon and life for dying souls.”*  
And, then, sing you to the Holy Spirit! Let us never fail in praising Him. I am afraid we often do. We forget Him too much in our sermons, our prayers and our hymns—or we mention Him, perhaps, as a matter of course, with formal expressions rather than with feelings of the most intense fervor. Oh, how our hearts are bound reverently to worship the Divine Indweller who, according to His abundant mercy, has made our bodies to be His Temple wherein He deigns to dwell!—  
*“We give You, sacred Spirit, praise,  
Who in our hearts of sin and woe  
Makes living springs of Grace arise,  
And into boundless Glory flow.”*  
Praise you, with your songs, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—the Triune God of Israel! Have you understood this? To Jehovah let your song be addressed. Thrice be His holy name repeated!  
Then, be careful of the Psalmist’s instructions. Let the song that you sing be a new song. “O sing unto the Lord a new song!” Not the song of your old legal bondage which you used to sing so tremblingly, with the dread of a slave—a new and nobler song becomes you who are the Lord’s children, His sons and daughters! “O sing unto the Lord a new song!” To some of you the song of Redemption is quite new. Once you sang the songs of Bacchus or of Venus, or else you hummed over some light air, without meaning or motive, unless to while away your time and drive away all serious thoughts. O you who used so readily to sing the songs of Babylon, sing now the songs of Zion quite as freely and earnestly! “Sing unto the Lord a new song.”  
By a “new” song, is meant the best song. It is put for that which is most elegant, most exquisite and best composed. Pindar says, “Give me old wine, but give me a new song.” So may we say, “Give us the old wines of the Kingdom of God, but let us sing unto the Lord a new song”—the best that we can find, no borrowed air, no hackneyed lyric—and let our spirits sing unto the Lord that which wells up fresh out of the quickened heart. A new song, always new! Keep up the freshness of your praise. Do not drivel down into dull routine. The drowsy old clerks in the dreary old churches used always to say, “Let us sing to the praise and glory of God such-and-such a Psalm,” till I should think the poor old Tate and Brady version was pretty well used up. We have new mercies to celebrate, therefore we must have new songs—  
*“Blest be his love who now has set  
New time upon the score.”*  
With “new time upon the score,” let there be new notes for Him who renews the face of Nature.  
And have we not, dear Brothers and Sisters, new graces? Then let us sing with our new faith, our new love and our new hope! Some of you have very lately been made new creatures in Christ Jesus—sing you unto the Lord a new song. Surely He has done great things for you, whereof you are glad. Others of you have been converted for years, yet, if your inward man is renewed day by day, your praises shall be always new. Luther used to say that the wounds of Christ seemed to him to bleed today as if they had never bled before, for he found such freshness in his Master. You pluck a flower and it soon loses its scent and begins to wither, but our sweet Lord Jesus has a savor about His name that never departs. We take His name to lie like a bundle of camphire all night between our breasts and in the morning it smells as sweet as when we laid down to sleep. And when we come to die, that Lily of the valleys will drop with the same profusion as it did when, with our youthful hands, we first plucked it and came to Jesus and gave Him all our trust! “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Let the freshness of your joy and the fullness of your thanks be perennial as the days of Heaven!

This song, according to our text, is designed to be universal. “Sing unto the Lord all the earth.” Let parents and children mingle in its strains. Let not the aged among you say, “Our voices are cracked,” but sing to the Lord with all the voice you have and all the compass you can. And you young people, give the Lord the highest notes you are able to reach! Still sing unto the Lord, you that are rich—sing unto the Lord who has saved you, for it is not many of your sort that He saves—  
*“Gold and the Gospel seem to ill agree—  
Religion always sides with poverty,”*  
said John Bunyan, and he spoke the truth! Sing unto the Lord, you poor ones whom the Lord has favored, for still does it happen that “the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.” Sing unto Him, you who are learned in many matters. Let your talents make your song more full of understanding. And you who are unlearned, if you cannot put so much of understanding into the song, put more of the spirit and sing with all the more heartiness. All the earth should sing! There is not one of us but has cause for song and certainly not one saint but ought especially to praise the name of the Lord. You remember that passage in the 107th Psalm, (it is worth noticing), where the Psalmist says, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,” as if they, above all others, ought to say, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.”  
In addition to its being a new song, and a universal one, it is to be a very inspiration of gratitude. “Sing unto the Lord: bless His name.” How apt you are, in speaking of anyone who has been kind to you, to say, “God bless him!” The expression comes right up from your heart. And although you cannot invoke any blessing on God, you can desire for His name every blessing and every tribute of homage. You can desire for His cause that it may be established and may be triumphant. You may desire for His people that they may be helped, made holy and guided to their eternal rest. You may desire for mankind that they may hallow God’s holy name and all because you feel you owe so much to the Lord that you cannot help praising—and cannot help wishing that your praise should be fruitful on earth and acceptable in Heaven.  
In two ways, I think, it becomes us to sing God’s praises. We ought to sing with the voice. I do not consider we sing enough to God. The poet speaks of “angel harp and human voice.” If the angel harp is more skillful, surely the human voice is more grateful. For my part, I like to hear sacred songs in all sorts of places. The maidservant can sing at her work and the carter as he drives his team. The occupations are few which could not be enlivened by repeating the words and running over the tune of a hymn. If it were only in a faint whisper, the habit might be cultivated. You might expose yourselves, it is true, to a taunt and be upbraided as “a Psalm-singing Methodist,” but that would not do you any hurt—better that than make a ribald jest or utter an impious blasphemy! Those who lend their tongues to such vile uses have something to be ashamed of. Lovers of pleasure sing their songs and poor trash, for the most part, they are. If the snatches we catch in the streets are the echoes of the saloon and the music hall, little credit is due to those who cater for public amusement. Lacking alike in sense and sentiment, they betray the degeneracy of the times and the depravity of popular taste.  
There is a literature of song in which peasants may rejoice, of which patriots may be proud and to which poets may turn with envious eyes. Why wed your pretty tunes to paltry words? The higher the art, the more the pity to debase it. If you cull over our hymn books for samples of bad poetry, loose rhyme, and puerile thoughts, that reviewers like to revile, and libertines like to laugh at, we can only say, “Well, we cannot always vindicate the culture of those whose sincerity we hold in the highest esteem. But we will dare to confront you on equal terms—the sanctuary versus the saloon—our vocalists against your vocalists, from the sacred oratorios of Handel to the choicest of your operas, from the cant of our revival hymns to the catch of your last sensational songs! Yes, indeed, the people of God should sing more. Were we to try the exercise, we would find no small degree of pleasure in the practice. It would do us good to praise God more day by day. When we get together, two or three of us, we are in the habit of saying, “Let us pray.” Might we not sometimes say, “Let us sing”? We have our regular Prayer Meetings, why do we not have Praise Meetings just as often?—  
*“Prayer and praise for sins forgiven  
Make up on earth the bliss of Heaven.”*  
We are like a bird that has only one wing. There is much prayer, but there is little praise. “Sing unto the Lord. Sing unto the Lord.”  
To sing with the heart, is the very essence of song—  
*“In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am And my heart it does leap at the sound of His name.”*Though the tongue may not be able to express the language of the soul, the heart is glad. Some persons seem never to sing with their heart. Their lips move, but their heart does not beat. In their common daily life, they move about as if they had been born on a dark winter’s night and carried the cold chill into all their concerns. The lamentation they constantly utter is this, “All these things are against me.” Their experience is comprised in this sentence, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” They never get into the harbor. “In Me you shall have peace,” is a secret they have never realized. They are fond of calling this world a howling wilderness and they are utterly oblivious of its orchards and vineyards. Were God to put them in the garden of Eden, they would not take any notice of the fruit or the flowers. They would go straight away to the serpent and begin saying, “Ah, there’s a snake here!” Their harp is hung on the willows—they never can sing, for their heart is unstrung.  
Well, dear Friends, a Christian ought to be like a horse that has bells on his head, so that he cannot go anywhere without ringing them and making music! His whole life should be a Psalm—every step should be in harmony, every thought should constitute a note, every word he utters should be a component part of the joyful strain! It is a blessed thing to see a Christian going about his business like the high priest of old who, wherever he went, made music with the golden bells. Oh, to have a cheerful spirit, not the levity of the thoughtless, nor the gaiety of the foolish, nor even the mirth of the healthy—there is a cheerful spirit which is the gift of Grace—that can and does rejoice evermore. Then, when troubles come we bear them cheerfully! Let fortune smile, we receive it with equanimity. Or let losses befall us, we endure them with resignation, being willing, so long as God is glorified, to accept anything at His hands.  
These are the people to recommend Christianity. Their cheerful conversation attracts others to Christ. As for those people who are morose or morbid, sullen or severe, harsh in their judgment of their fellow men, or rebellious against the will of God, people of a covetous disposition, a peevish temper and a quarrelsome character—unto them it is of no use to say, “O sing unto the Lord,” for they will never do it! They have not any bells in the tower of their heart—what chimes can they ring? Their harps have lost their strings—how can they magnify the Most High? But genuine piety finds expression in jubilant song—this is the initiative, though it is far from exhausting its resources!  
II. Now, in the second place, let me stir you up, especially you who are members of this Church, to such DAILY CONVERSATION and such HABITUAL DISCOURSE as shall be fitted to spread the Gospel which you love.  
Our text admonishes you to “show forth His salvation.” You believe in the salvation of God—a salvation all of Grace from first to last. You have seen it. You have received it. You have experienced it. Well, now, show it forth! Explain it to others and with the explanation let there be an illustration--exemplify it by your lives. God has shone upon you with the light of His Countenance that you may reflect His brightness and irradiate others. Every Christian here is like the moon which shines with borrowed light. But the sun lends not its bright rays to be hoarded up. It is that they may scatter beams of brightness over this world of night! Take care, then, that you are faithful to your trust. Show forth His salvation. God knows that I try to do so from the pulpit. I wish that you would all try and do so from the pews. Are you lacking in opportunities? I think not. Before and after service, especially to strangers and such as may have been induced to come and hear the Gospel, speak a word in season—thoughtfully, prayerfully, softly, talk with them.  
Show forth this salvation, too, in your own houses, or on your visits, or wherever your lot may happen, in God’s Providence, to be cast. It is wonderful how God blesses little efforts, very little efforts! I have sometimes, I am sorry to say not as often as I ought, scattered Seed by the wayside. Only a few nights ago, I had been driven by a driver and after I had alighted and given him the fare, he took a little Testament out of his pocket and said, “It is about 15 years ago since you gave me this, and said a word to me about my soul—and it has stuck by me and I have not let a day pass since without reading it.” I felt glad. I know that if Christian people would try and show forth God’s salvation, they would often be surprised to find how many hearts would gladly receive it. Beloved, show forth this salvation from day to day. Let it not be merely on a Sunday! While you hold that day as specially sacred, let no other day be common or unclean. We are thankful for the kindly efforts put forth in the Sunday school and elsewhere, on our Sabbaths, but we want Christian activity to be put forth from day to day! Let your zeal for the conversion of your fellow creatures be continuous. “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand: for you know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” The result of the Sabbath work may, perhaps, not be seen by you, when the result of Monday’s work may very speedily appear.

“Show forth His salvation from day to day.” This admonition is enforced in three clauses, so let us notice the second. “Declare His glory among the heathen.” It is the same thing in another form. When you are telling out the Gospel, point especially to the glory of it. Show them the justice of the great Substitution and the mercy of it. Show them the wisdom which devised the plan whereby, without a violation of His Law, God could yet pardon rebellious sinners. Impress upon those whom you talk that the Gospel you have to tell them of is no common-place system of expediency, but it is really a glorious Revelation of Divinity. You know men are very much attracted by anything of glory and renown. They will even rush to the cannon’s mouth for so-called glory! Now, be sure, when you are talking to others about the salvation you have received at the hands of your dear Lord and Master, that you tell them about the glory thereof—what a glory it brings to Christ and to what a glory it will bring every sinner by-and-by. Tell them of the glory of being pardoned, the glory of being accepted, the glory of being justified, the glory of being sanctified. Is it not all “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”? I think you might relate some scenes from the deathbeds of the saints you have known, on which rays of glory have fallen—but I am sure you might anticipate the glory, which words cannot picture, or imagination realize, in the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, the Resurrection of the just and the establishment of the everlasting Kingdom. Dwell upon these things! Declare His glory!  
And do not be ashamed to do this in the presence of people of a disreputable character, though their ignorance and degradation be ever so palpable. “Declare His glory among the heathen.” “I am going on a mission to the heathen,” said a minister once to his people. Mistaking his meaning, they went home deploring the loss of their pastor. On the following Sunday, when they found him in the pulpit, they discovered that he had not been out of the city all week and when they wanted to know what parts he had visited, and what people he had seen, he reminded them that he had heathens at home—and they were to be found even in his own congregation. Ah, and there may be some heathens here! At any rate, there are plenty of heathens in this great city of London. I have no doubt there are parts of this metropolis in which hundreds and even thousands of people reside who are as ignorant of the plan of salvation as the inhabitants of Coomassie. They know nothing of Jesus, even though the Light of God is so bright around them. “Declare His glory among the heathen,” you lovers of Christ! Penetrate into the dark places! Break up fresh ground, Christian men and women!  
I am persuaded and this is a matter I have often spoken of, that many of you who sit and hear sermons on the Sunday, ought rather to turn out and preach the Gospel. While we are glad to see you occupying pews, it will be a greater joy to miss you from your seats if we only know that you are declaring God’s glory among the heathen! I am not sure that we are, all of us, right to be living cooped up in this little island of ours. There are, in England, enough disciples of Jesus to bear the Gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth—but perhaps there is not one Christian in five or ten thousand who ever deliberately thinks about going to the heathen to make known to them the way of salvation and to declare the glory of the Lord among those who have never heard His name. Pray that there may yet come a wonderful wave of God’s Spirit over our Churches which shall bear upon its crest hundreds of ardent spirits resolved to carry the tidings of redemption to the jungle and the fever swamps, to the high latitudes and the southern islands! Oh, that the love of Christ may constrain them! Know you not that Christ has determined to save men by the preaching of the Gospel? Has He not charged His disciples to go into all the word and preach the Gospel to every creature? How poorly has His Church carried out this commission! If you love Christ, here is the opportunity for you to show your love—go and declare His glory among the heathen!  
A third expression is used here. “Declare His wonders among all people.” Our Gospel is a Gospel of wonders. It deals with amazing sin in a wonderful way. It presents to us a wonderful Savior and tells us of His wonderful complex Person. It points us to His wonderful Atonement and it takes the blackest sinner and makes him wonderfully clean! It makes him a new creature and works a wonderful change in him. It conducts him to wonders of happiness and wonders of strength, and yet onward to greater wonders of light and life, for it opens up to him the wonders of the Covenant. It gives him wonderful provisions, wonderful deliverances and leads him right up, by the power of Him who is called Wonderful, to the gates of that Wonderland where we shall forever—  
*“Sing, with rapture and surprise,  
His loving kindness in the skies.”*  
Surely, dear Christian Friends, we ought to talk about the wonders of the Lord our God, and especially should we dwell upon those wonders which we have ourselves seen. Of every Christian, it might be said that he is a wonder. Will you think a minute, Christian, of the wonder that God has made of you and the wonders that He has done for you? “That ever I should be,” is a wonder—will you not say that? And then, “That ever I should be saved, is a wonder of wonders.” That you should have been kept till now, that you should not have been allowed to go back, that you should have been preserved under so many troubles, that your prayers should have been heard so continuously, that, notwithstanding your ill manners, the love of Christ should still have remained the same—oh, but I cannot recite the tale of marvels—it is a long series of wonders! The Christian’s life, if the worldling could understand it, would seem to him like a romance. The wonders of Grace far exceed the wonders of Nature and, of all the miracles God, Himself, has ever worked, there are no miracles so matchless in wonder as the miracles of Grace in the heart of man! Beloved, declare these miracles, these wonders—tell them to others!  
Men like to hear a tale of wonder. They will gather round the fire, at eventide, when the logs are burning, and delightedly listen to a story of wonder. When you go home, young man, for your next holiday—if God has converted you, tell what great things the Lord has done for you. And when you go home, Mary, and see your mother—if the Lord has met with you, tell her what the Lord has done for you. “Declare His wonders among all people.” Do not be afraid of speaking about the Gospel to anybody or in any company. Whoever they may be—whether they are rich or poor, high or low—if you get an opportunity of declaring the wonders of God’s Grace, do not let the Gospel be unknown for lack of a tongue to tell it.  
So, you see, I have put before you these two outlets for your love. First, sacred song and, secondly, gracious discourse. Be sure to use them both and if any bid you hold your peace, shall I tell you the answer? Use the same answer which your Master did to the Pharisees when they complained of the shouts of the little children—“If these should hold their tongues, the very stones would cry out.” Ordinary Christians may be quiet because God has done nothing very wonderful for them. They go through the world in a very ordinary kind of way. Their religion is skindeep and no more. But those who know that they deserved the deepest Hell and who have been saved by a mighty effort of Infinite Mercy must tell what God has done for them! They must come out from the world and be separate. They must be decided, zealous and even enthusiastic. Necessity is laid upon them to be earnest and intense in all they do and in all they say. They cannot help it, for the love of Jesus will fire their souls with a passion that cannot be quenched. “We thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not live henceforth unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.” God help you, Beloved, thus to live!  
As for those of you who have never found the Savior, you cannot tell of His excellence or publish His worth. But I do trust that you will not forget that Jesus is to be found by those who seek Him, for whoever believes on Him shall be saved. Take Him at His word. Rely on His promise. Trust Him. Commit your soul into His keeping. Cast yourself unreservedly on His mercy. He will not spurn you, but He will receive you graciously. And you shall yet praise Him and He will be the health of your countenance and your God.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **DANIEL 9:14-23.**

Verses 14-21. Therefore has the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which He does, for we obeyed not His voice. And now, O Lord our God, that has brought Your people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has gotten You renown, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I beseech You, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain: because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake. O my God, incline Your ears and hear, open Your eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name: for we do not present our supplications before You for our righteousness, but for Your great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for Your own sake, O my God: for Your city and Your people are called by Your name. And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; yes, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. That is the time when prayer is always heard, when the lamb is offered, and his blood is sprinkled, and blessed be God, the Sacrifice in which we trust has been offered once and for all. The Christ, who has gone into Heaven as a Lamb that had been slain, has, by His one offering, made perpetual oblation unto the Most High on our behalf. So pray when we will, we may expect an answer. See how quick it was in Daniel’s case: “While I was speaking in prayer,” the angel Gabriel, in the form of a man, appeared unto him, and brought him the answer to his petition.

22, 23. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the commandant came forth, and I am come to show you, for you are greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. And then he told him of the Messiah who was coming, of all that would happen to Him, of the week of respite, and then of the final consummation when God would permit the foreign prince to come and destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and to pour upon them the desolations which He had determined to inflict upon them.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 885, 102 (PART 2), 135 (VERSION 2).  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #208 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

RIGHTEOUS HATRED  
NO. 208

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 8, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“You that love the Lord, hate evil.” Psalm 97:10.**

THE Christian religion is a golden chain with which the hands of men are fettered from all hatred. The spirit of Christ is love. Wherever He governs, love reigns as a necessary consequence. The Christian man is not allowed to hate anyone. “You have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you,” said Jesus, “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.”

The word “hate” must be cut out of the language of a Christian, except when it is used with one meaning and intention only and that, the meaning of my text. You have no right, O Christian, to tolerate within your bosom wrath, malice, anger, harshness, or uncharitableness towards any creature that God’s hands have made. When you hate the man’s sins, you are not to hate him but to love the sinner, even as Christ loved sinners and came to seek and save them. When you hate a man’s false doctrine, you are still to love the man and hate his doctrine even out of love to his soul with an earnest desire that he may be reclaimed from his error and brought into the way of the Truth of God. You have no right to excrete your hatred upon any creature, however fallen or debased, however much he may irritate your temper, or injure you in your estate or reputation.

Still, hatred is a power of manhood and we believe that all powers of manhood are to be exercised and every one of them may be exercised as in the fear of God. It is possible to be angry and yet sin not and it is possible to hate and yet not be guilty of sin, but be positively performing a duty. Christian Man, you may have hatred in your heart, if you will allow it to run in one stream only—then it shall not do mischief, but it shall even do good—“You that love the Lord, hate evil.” As much as the revengeful man hates his enemy, so must you hate evil. As much as contending despots in battle hate one another and only seek an opportunity to meet each other face to face, so you must hate evil. As much as Hell hates Heaven and as much as Heaven hates Hell, so must you hate evil.

The whole of that passion which when let loose in a wrong track becomes as a fierce lion on its prey, you must keep on leash, (like a noble lion, only destitute of ferocity) against any whom it should not hurt. But you may let it slip against the enemies of the Lord your God and do great exploits thereby. Tell me of a man who is never angry—that man has not any true zeal for God. We must sometimes be angry against sin. When we

see evil, though not vindictive against the persons who commit it, yet angry against the evil we must be. We must hate wickedness always.

Does not David say, “I hate them with a perfect hatred, yes, I count them my enemies”? We are to love our enemies, but we are to hate God’s enemies. We are to love sinners, but we are to hate sin. As much as it is in the power of man to hate, so much are we to hate evil in every form and fashion.

The duty here enjoined is a general one to all God’s people. We are to hate all evil—not some evils. It was said, you know, long ago, of certain professors, that they did—

*“Compound for sins they were inclined to*

*By damning those they had no mind to.”*  
And there are some, I dare say, in this day who think others extremely guilty for committing iniquities which they do not care to commit, but they themselves commit other sins with which they deal very gently. O Christian, never take hold of sin except with a gauntlet on your hand! Never go to it with the kid-glove of friendship, never talk delicately of it. But always hate it in every shape.

If it comes to you as a little fox, take heed of it, for it will spoil the grapes. If it comes to you as a warring lion, seeking whom it may devour— or if it comes with the hug of a bear, seeking by a pretended affection to entice you into sin, smite it, for its hug is death and its clasp destruction. Sin of every kind you are to war with—of lip, of hand, of heart. Sin, however gilded over with profit, however varnished with the seemliness of morality, however much it may be complimented by the great, or however popular it may be with the multitude—you are to hate it everywhere, in all its disguises—every day in the week and in every place.

War to the knife with sin! We are to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard. With all your hosts, O Hell, with every brat of your offspring, O Satan, we are to be at enmity. Not one sin are we to spare, but against the whole are we to proclaim an utter and entire war of extermination.

In endeavoring to address you upon this subject, I shall first of all begin with it at home—Christian Man, hate all evil in yourself. And then, secondly, we will let it go abroad—Christian Man, hate all evil in other people, wherever you see it.

I. First, then, CHRISTIAN, HATE ALL EVIL IN YOURSELF. I will strive now to excite your hate against it and then I will try to urge you and assist you to destroy it.

You have good reason to hate all evil—greater reason than ever the most injured man could bring forward for the hatred of his enemies. Consider what evil has already done to you. Oh, what a world of mischief sin has brought into your heart! Sin stopped up your eyes so that you could not see the beauty of the Savior. It thrust its finger into your ears so that you could not hear the sweet invitations of Jesus—sin turned your feet into the way of evil and filled your hands with filthiness. No, worse than that, sin poured poison into the very fountain of your being. It tainted your heart and made it “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”

Oh, what a creature you were when sin had done its utmost with you before Divine Grace began to mend you! You were an heir of wrath even as others. You did “run with the multitude to do evil.” Your mouth was an “open sepulcher.” You did flatter with your tongue and there is nothing that can be said of your fellow creature living in sin that could not be said of you. You must plead guilty to the charge, “such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

Oh, you have good cause for hating sin when you look back to the rock from where you were hewn and to the hole of the pit from where you were dug. Such mischief did evil do you that your soul would have been everlastingly lost had not omnipotent love interfered to redeem you. Christian, hate evil. It has been your murderer. It has put its dagger into your heart. It has thrust poison into your mouth. It has done you all the mischief that Hell itself could do—mischief which would have worked your eternal undoing had not the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ prevented it. You have good reason, then, to hate sin.

Again, Christian, hate evil, for it would be unbecoming if you did not when you consider your position in life. A Christian belongs to the royal blood of the universe. Beggars’ children may run about the street with unkempt hair and shoeless feet. But should princes of the blood revel in uncleanness? We do not expect to see monarchs’ children appareled in rags. We do not expect to see them rolling themselves in the mire of the streets. And you, Christian, you are one of God’s aristocracy, a prince of the blood of Heaven, a friend of angels! Yes, and a friend of God.

Good reason have you to hate all evil. Why, Man, you are a Nazarite, dedicated to God. Now to the Nazarite it was enjoined that not only he should not drink wine, but he was not even to eat the grape, nor might he so much as taste the bark of the vine, or anything whatsoever that grew upon it. He must neither touch nor handle it, or else he would be defiled. So is it with you. You are the Lord’s Nazarite, set apart for Himself. Avoid, then, every false way.

Let the appearance of evil be kept from you—it is beneath your dignity to indulge in the sins which disgrace other men. You are not a snob as they are. You are of a nobler race, you have sprung from the loins of the Son of God. Is He not your everlasting Father, even He who is the Prince of Peace? I beseech you, never demean your royal lineage nor let your holy ancestry be stained. You are a peculiar people, a royal generation. Why, then, would you stain your garments in the dust—“You that love the Lord, hate evil.”

Again—you have good reason to hate sin, because it weakens you. Go when you have committed a folly, retire to your chamber and fall upon your knees in prayer. Before the sin was committed, your prayer reached

the ear of God and the blessings came down swift as lightning. But now your knees are weak, your heart refuses to desire and your tongue refuses to express the faint desires you strive to reach. You attempt, but you fail. You groan, but Heaven is shut against your cry. You weep, but your tear penetrates not so as to obtain an answer from the breast of God. There you are. You bring your wants before the Throne and you carry them away again.

Prayer becomes a painful duty instead of a most gracious and excellent privilege. This is the result of sin. “Sin will make you leave off praying, or else praying will make you leave off sinning.” Oh, you can never be strong in sin and strong in prayer. As long as you indulge in lust, or sin, or wantonness of any kind, your power in prayer is taken away and your lips are shut when you attempt to approach your God. Or if you will, try another exercise—after committing a sin, go into the world and seek to do good. Why, Man, you cannot do it. You have lost the power to cleanse others when you are impure yourself. What? Can I, with filthy fingers, wash the face of others? Shall I attempt to plow another man’s field while my own is lying fallow and tall rank thistles and weeds are overspreading it?

I am powerless to do good until I have first cleansed my own vessel and made that pure. An unholy minister must be an unsuccessful one and an unholy Christian must be an unfruitful one. Unless you desire to have your sinews loosed, to have the marrow of your bones scorched from you—unless you will that the sap of your being should be dried up, I beseech you, hate sin, for sin can debilitate and weaken you so much that you shall drag along a miserable existence, the very skeleton of a soul instead of flourishing in the ways of your God. “You that love the Lord, hate evil.”

In the next place. you will find it extremely useful if, in order to get rid of sin, you are not content with merely restraining it, but always seeking to have it taken clean away by the Holy Spirit. Mere moralists restrain their sins like a river that has locks and dykes—the water is kept from flowing, but then it gradually swells upward and upward, till by-and-by it overflows with terrible fury. Now, don’t be content with mere restraining grace—that will never purge you—for the sin may be there though it break not out. Pray to God that your sin may be taken away and that though the remnant and the root thereof remain, though the channel be there, yet the stream may be dried up like the stream of the Euphrates before the presence of the Lord your God.

Again—you have good reason to hate evil, for if you indulge in it you will have to smart for it. God will never kill His children, He has put His sword away. He sheathed that once for all in the breast of Christ, but He has a rod and that rod sometimes He lays on with a very heavy hand and makes the whole body to tingle. The Lord will not be angry with His people so as to cast them off but He will be so angry with them that they shall have to cry, “Heal the bones that you have broken and restore my soul, O Lord my God.”

Ah, you that have ever backslidden, you know what it is to be well scourged, for when Christ’s sheep run away from the Shepherd, He will not let them perish, but He will often allow the black dog to bring them back in his mouth. He will allow sore trouble and sharp affliction to lay hold upon them so that they are cast down almost to the gates of Hell. A Christian shall never be destroyed, but he shall almost be destroyed—his life shall not totally fail him, but he shall be so beaten and bruised that he shall scarcely know whether he has any life left in him at all. Hate sin, O Christian, unless you desire trouble. If you would strew your path with thorns and put nettles in your death pillow, then live in sin. But if you would dwell in the heavenly places, hearing the everlasting chimes of Paradise ringing in your own heart, then walk in all the ways of holiness unto the end. Christian Man, hate evil.

So far, I have only addressed you selfishly. I have shown you how evil may hurt yourselves. Now I will address you with another argument. Christian, hate evil—hate it in yourself, because evil in you will do hurt to others. What hurt the sin of a Christian does to the children of God! The sharpest trials God’s Church has ever had has come from her own sons and daughters. I see her, I see her with her garments rent and defiled. I see her hands all bleeding and her back scarred. O Church of the living God, you fairest among women, how are you wounded! Where have you received these wounds?

Has the infidel spit in your face and reviled you? Has the Arian rent your garments? Has the Socinian cast filth upon the whiteness of your apparel? Who has wounded your hands and who has scarred your back? Has this been done by the impious and profane? “No,” she says, “these are the wounds I have received in the house of my friends. Against my enemies I wear a secret armor, but my friends penetrate within it and cut me to the very quick.” The bishops of God’s Church, the professed leaders of the Lord’s hosts, the pretended followers of the Redeemer, have done more damage to the Church than all the Church’s enemies.

If the Church were not a Divine thing, protected by God, she must have ceased to exist, merely through the failure and iniquity of her own professed friends! I do not wonder that the Church of God survived martyrdom and death. But I do marvel that she has survived the unfaithfulness of her own children and the cruel backsliding of her own members. O Christians, you do not know how you cause God’s name to be blasphemed, how you stain His Church and bring dishonor upon her escutcheon, when you indulge in sin. “You that love the Lord, hate evil”

Again—hate it not only for the Church’s sake, but for the poor sinner’s sake. How many sinners every year are driven away from all thought of religion by the inconsistency of professors? And have you ever noticed how the world always delights to chronicle the inconsistency of a professor? I saw only yesterday an account in the paper of a wretch who had committed lust and it was said that, “He had a very sanctified appearance.” Yes, I thought, that is the way the press always likes to speak. But I very much question whether there are many editors that know what a sanctified appearance means—at least they will have to look a long time among their own class before they find many that have got much sanctification. However, the reporter put it down that the man had “a sanctified appearance.” And of course it was intended as a fling against all those who make a profession of religion, by making others believe that this man was a professor, too.

And really the world has had some grave cause for it, for we have seen professing Christians in these days that are an utter disgrace to Christianity and there are things done in the name of Jesus Christ that it would be a shame to do in the name of Beelzebub. There are things done, too, by those who are accounted members of the Church of our Lord Jesus, methinks, so shameful that Pandemonium itself would scarcely own them. The world has had much cause to complain of the Church. O children of God, be careful. The world has a lynx eye—it will see your faults. It will be impossible to hide them. And it will magnify your faults. It will slander you if you have none—give it at least no ground to work upon. “Let your garments be always white.” Walk in the fear of the Lord and let this be your daily prayer, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe.”

Once more—I have one argument that methinks must touch your hearts and make you hate evil. You have a Friend, the best friend you ever had. I know Him and have loved Him and He has loved me. There was a day, as I took my walks abroad, when I came hard by a spot forever engraved upon my memory, for there I saw this Friend—my best, my only Friend, murdered. I stooped down in sad fright and looked at Him. He was basely murdered. I saw that His hands had been pierced with rough iron nails and His feet had been rent with the same.

There was misery in His dead countenance so terrible that I scarcely dared to look upon it. His body was emaciated with hunger, His back was red with bloody scourges and His brow had a circle of wounds about it— clearly could one see that these had been pierced by thorns. I shuddered, for I had known this Friend full well. He never had a fault. He was the purest of the pure, the holiest of the holy. Who could have injured Him? For He never injured any man—all His life long He “went about doing good.” He had healed the sick, He had fed the hungry, He had raised the dead—for which of these works did they kill Him?

He had never breathed out anything but love. And as I looked into the poor sorrowful face so full of agony and yet so full of love, I wondered who could have been a wretch so vile us to pierce hands like His. I said within myself, “Where live these traitors? Where can they live? Who are these that could have smitten such an One as this?” Had they murdered an oppressor we might have forgiven them. Had they slain one who had indulged in vice or villainy, it might have been his due desert. Had it been a murderer and a rebel, or one who had committed sedition, we would have said, “Bury his corpse—justice has at last given him his due.” But when You were slain, my best, my only Beloved, where lodged the traitors? Let me seize them and they shall be put to death. If there are torments that I can devise, surely they shall endure them all.

Oh, what jealousy! What revenge I felt! If I might but find these murderers what would I do with them! And as I looked upon that corpse I heard a footstep and wondered where it was. I listened and I clearly perceived that the murderer was close at hand. It was dark and I groped about to find him. I found that somehow or other wherever I put my hand I could not meet with him, for he was nearer to me than my hand would go. At last I put my hand upon my breast. “I have you now,” said I. For lo, he was in my own heart! The murderer was hiding within my own bosom, dwelling in the recesses of my inmost soul. Ah, then I wept indeed, that I, in the very presence of my murdered Master, should be harboring the murderer.

And I felt myself most guilty while I bowed over His corpse and sung that plaintive hymn—  
*“It was you my sins, my cruel sins,  
His chief tormentors were:  
Each of my crimes became a nail  
And unbelief the spear.”*

Revenge! Revenge! You that fear the Lord and love His name, take vengeance on your sins and hate all evil.

Now, my Beloved, my next endeavor must be to urge you to put your sins to death. What shall be done in order that you and I may get rid of our sins? There is the axe of the Law. Shall we bring that out and smite our sins with it? Alas, they will never die under the blow of Moses—

*“Law and terrors do but harden  
All the while they work alone.”*

I have often tried to overcome sin by the thought of the punishment attached to it but I have very seldom found myself in a frame of mind in which my heart would receive that reason. I believe that to the most of us the terrors of the Law, although they ought to be exceedingly terrible, have but little power to check us from sin. I met with a story the other day which showed me, if nothing else, the utter powerlessness of terror for curbing the heart from sin.

It is pretended by some that it is necessary that men who commit murder should be capitally executed in order to deter others from crime. There is not, however, I believe, the shadow of a hope that the execution of a murderer will ever produce any such effect. Three traitors were once executed in this country—Thistlewood was one of them—and when the executioner smote off the head of the first man and held it up, saying, “this is the head of a traitor,” there was a shudder running through the multitude, a chill, cold feeling which was perceptible even by the executioner.

When he killed the next man and held up the head in like manner, it was evidently looked upon with intense curiosity and awe, but with nothing like so much thrilling caution as the first. And strange to say, when the third head was smitten off, the man was about to hold it up, but he let it drop and the crowd with one voice cried, “Aha, butter fingers!” and laughed. Would you have supposed that an English crowd, on seeing a poor man die, could have become so hardened in so short a time, as actually to have made a joke of such an incident?

Yet so it is. Law and terrors never do and never will produce any other effect than to drive men to sin and make them think lightly of it. I would not, therefore, advise a Christian, if he would get rid of his sins, to indulge continually in the thought of the punishment. But let him adopt a better process—let him go and sit down at the Cross of Christ and endeavor to draw evangelical repentance from the atonement which Christ has offered for our guilt. I know of no cure for sin in a Christian like an abundant meditation with the Lord Jesus. Dwell much with Him and it is impossible for you to dwell much with sin. What? My Lord Jesus, can I sit at the foot of that tree accursed and see Your blood flowing for my guilt and after that indulge in transgression? Yes, I may do it, for I am vile enough for anything, but still this shall be the great clog upon the wheel of my sin and this repress my lust the most of all—the thought that Jesus Christ has lived and died for me.

Again—if you would check sin, endeavor to get as much light as you can upon it. The housewife, when she is busy about her house, with curtains drawn—may have dusted all the tables and think everything looks clean. But she opens a little corner of the window and in streams a ray of light, in which ten thousand grains of dust are dancing up and down. “Ah,” she thinks, “my room is not so clean as I thought it was! Here is dust where I thought there was none.” Now, endeavor to get not the farthing rush light of your own judgment, but the sunlight of the Holy Spirit streaming upon your heart and it will help you to detect your sin—and detection of sin is half-way towards its cure. Look well at your transgressions and endeavor to find them out.

Yet another thing, when you have fallen into one sin make confession of it and let that lead you to search for all the rest. David, you know, never wrote so abject a confession as he did after he had committed one act of sin. Then he was led to search his heart and find out all the rest of his iniquities and he made a complete confession of them all. When you see one sin, be quite sure there is a host there, for they always hunt in packs. And take care when you discharge your confession against one, that there is enough powder and shot in your confession to wound all your sins and send them limping away. Be not content with overcoming one sin or one transgression, but labor to get rid of all.

Again—there are many sins by which you will be enticed unless you always take care to strip sin of its disguises. Sin will sometimes come to you, wrapped up in a Babylonian garment, like Achan’s wedge—pull off the covering and you will discover its iniquity. It will sometimes come to you like the iniquity of King Saul under the form of a sacrifice—strip it and discover that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Alas, sin is like Jezebel! It attires its head and paints its face and appears lovely to us— unmask it, see its vileness, discover its filthiness, disdain the profit with which it gilds itself, take away the applause with which it endeavors to plume itself and let it stand in all its naked deformity and then you will not be so likely to run into it.

Once again—try always, when your mind is in a sanctified state, to estimate the weight of the evil of sin. When you are in a sinful state you will not feel the weight of the evil. A man that dives into the water may have a thousand tons of water above his head and not feel the weight because the water is round about him. But take him out of the water and if you put half a tubful on his head, it presses him down. Now, while you indulge in sin, you will not feel its weight. But when you are out of sin, after it is over and the Spirit has applied the blood of sprinkling for your forgiveness and the sanctifying work of the Spirit has begun to restore you, then labor to realize the enormity of your guilt and by so doing you will be helped to hate it and to overcome it.

With regard to some sins, if you would avoid them, take one piece of advice—run away from them. Sins of lust especially are never to be fought with, except after Joseph’s way. And you know what Joseph did—he ran away. A French philosopher said, “Fly, fly, Telemaque—there remains no way of conquest but by flight.” The true soldiers of Christ’s Cross will stand foot to foot with any sin in the world except this. But here they turn their backs and fly and then they become conquerors. “Flee fornication,” said one of old and there was wisdom in the counsel—there is no way of overcoming it but by flight. If the temptation attacks you, shut your eyes and stop your ears and away, away from it. For you are only safe when you are beyond sight and earshot. “You that love the Lord, hate evil.” And endeavor with all your might to resist and overcome it in yourselves.

Once again—you that love the Lord, if you would keep from sin, seek always to have a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. Never trust yourselves a single day without having a fresh renewal of your piety before you go forth to the day’s duties. We are never safe unless we are in the Lord’s hands. No Christian, be he who he may or what he may, though he is renowned for his piety and prayerfulness, can exist a day without falling into great sin unless the Holy Spirit shall be his Protector. Old master Dyer says, “Lock up your hearts by prayer every morning and give God the key, so that nothing can get in. And then when you unlock your heart at night, there will be a sweet fragrance and perfume of love, joy and holiness.” Take care of that. It is only by the Spirit that you can be preserved from sin.

Above all, let us add, avoid all preachers who endeavor in anyway to palliate sin. Avoid all experiences and books of experience that give you a way of getting over the fact that the sin of God’s people is a vile thing. I know some folks who talk of their sins as if they were proud of them. They speak of their falls and their backslidings and transgressions as if they were blessed experiences—like the dog that had a bell round his neck because he was dangerous—they are proud of that very thing which is their shame.

Remember, a nettle is bad anywhere but it is never so bad as in a flower garden and sin is bad anywhere, but never so hateful as in a Christian. If as you are going home today you see a boy breaking windows, very likely you will speak to him. But if it is your own boy you will severely chastise him as sure as he is your own son. So likewise does God deal with His people. When sinners do mischief He rebukes them. When His people do the same He smites them. He will not pass over sin in His own children at any time. It shall never go unchastened. You that fear the Lord never palliate sin, for God will not do so. He hates it with perfect hatred.

II. My second point is, HATE SIN IN OTHERS. Mark it, do not hate others, but hate sin in others. As we have only a few minutes left I will occupy them with but one or two practical remarks.

If you hate sin in others, it will be necessary for you never in any way to countenance it. There is many a Christian who does more mischief than he knows of by a smile. You have heard a young man telling a story of some of his freaks. Perhaps it has been in a railway carriage and he has been very witty and you have smiled at him. He knows you and he seems to think he has done a brave thing—didn’t he make a Christian man smile at his sins?

You have sometimes heard loose, lewd conversation proceeding from ungodly men and you have not liked it. It has grated upon your ears. But you have sat very quietly and others have said, “Ah well, he was still enough. He was sucking it in and it was clear he liked it.” Thus it was stamped at once with the seal of your approbation. Now, never let sin have your countenance. Wherever you are, let it be known that you not only cannot endure it, but that you positively hate it. Don’t let people say, “Well, I don’t think he likes it.” But let them know you

 hate it, that you are absolutely angry with it, that you cannot smile at it, but feel your anger rise at the very mention of such shameful things.

In the last century it used to be fashionable and honorable to commit sins which are now looked upon with scorn and in another hundred years, some things that are done today will be discovered to be desperately vile and we shall look upon them with disdain also. Christian, I say never stamp another man’s sins with approval.

Again—whenever you are called upon to do it—and that will be very often—take care to let your sentiments with regard to sin come out. Sinful silence may make you a partaker in a sinner’s evil ways. If I saw a man breaking into a house as I were going by late in the evening, if I passed very gently, knowing that he was doing wrong and did not give the alarm, I think I should be an accomplice in the crime. And so, if you are sitting in company where there is evil speaking, or where Christ is blasphemed, if you do not say a word for your Master, you are committing sin in your silence—you are an accomplice in the iniquity.

Speak up for your Lord and Master. What if you should get upbraided for it and be called a Puritan? It is a grand name. What if some should say you are too precise? There is good need that some should be too precise where a great many are far too lax. Or if they should never welcome you in their company again, it will be a great gain to be out of it. What if they should speak evil of you? Know you not that you are to rejoice in that day when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ’s namesake? Always by your speaking boldly, let sin be put to the blush.

Then again—when you see evil in anyone, always seek, if you see the slightest hope of doing good, for an opportunity of telling him privately of it. I have heard of a gentleman who was swearing and a godly man who stood by, instead of upbraiding him for it, publicly said, “Sir, I wish to speak to you a moment.” “Well,” said the gentleman, “you had better come into the coffee room.” They went accordingly. And the godly man said to the other, “My dear Friend, I noticed that you took the name of God in vain. I know you will excuse my mentioning it. I did not say a word about it when others could hear. But really it is a great sin and no profit can come from it. Could you not avoid it in the future?”

The check was thankfully received. The gentleman bowed his acknowledgments, he confessed that it was the fault of his early education and he trusted that the rebuke might do him good. Do you not think that very often we lose an opportunity of showing our hatred of evil by not endeavoring privately to speak to those whom we discover indulging in sin? Never let slip an opportunity of having a shot at the devil, be it where it may. Always let fly at him whenever you see him. If you cannot do it in public, yet if you see a man doing evil, rebuke him in private for his sin.

And yet another thing. If you hate evil, do not get into it yourself, because it is of no use your talking to others about evil unless your own life is blameless. They that live in glass houses must not throw stones. Get out of your own glass house and then throw as many as you like. Speak to other people, when you have first of all endeavored to set your own life according to the compass of the Gospel.

And now, beloved Brothers and Sisters, all of you who love the Savior are exhorted this morning to hate evil. And I will just enlarge once more upon this exhortation. Join heart and hand in the hatred of evil with all men who seek to put it down. Wherever you see a society endeavoring to do good, encourage it. Let this be your doctrine—preach nothing up but Christ and nothing down but evil. Help all those that are for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. There is nothing else that can put evil away so quickly as the proclamation of right. Help the minister of the Gospel—

pray for him. Hold up his hands. Endeavor to strengthen him. As for yourself, become a tract distributor, a Sunday-School teacher, or a village preacher.

Show your hatred to evil by active efforts in putting it down. Distribute Bibles, scatter the Word of God broadcast over the land. Send your missionaries to foreign parts and let them penetrate the dens and alleys of London. Go among the rags and filth of our own population and seek to bring some one or two of the Lord’s precious jewels who are hidden in the dunghills of the metropolis to hear the Word of God preached.

Thus, let the Lord Jesus Christ by your means get the victory and let the evil of this world be cast out. How shall that be done but by the combined exertions of all Christ’s Church? In these days we have a great many men to fight Christ’s battles, if they would but fight. Our Churches are increasing at a great rate. There are an immense number of Christians now alive. But I think I would rather have the one hundred and twenty men that were in the upper chamber at the day of Pentecost than I would have the whole lot of you.

I do think those one hundred and twenty men had got more blood in them, more Divine Christian blood and zeal than as many millions of such poor creatures as we are. Why, in those days every member of the Church was a missionary. The women did not preach, it is true. But they did what is better than preaching—they lived out the Gospel. And all the men had something to say. They did not leave it as you do to your minister serving God by proxy. They did not set deacons up and leave them to do all God’s work while they folded their arms. Oh, no. All Christ’s soldiers went to battle. There was no drafting out one or two of them and then leaving the others to tarry at home and share the spoil. No! Everyone fought and great was the victory. Now, Beloved Christians, all of you, go at it and always at it!

O Spirit of the living God, descend on every heart and bid every one of Your soldiers take his sword in his hand and go straightway up to the victory. For when Zion’s children shall feel their individual responsibility, then shall come the day of her triumph. Then shall the walls of Jericho fall flat to the ground and every soldier of the living God shall be crowned a conqueror. “You that love the Lord, hate evil,” by God’s grace henceforth and forever. Amen.

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SOWN LIGHT  
NO. 836

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” Psalm 97:11.**

THIS appears to be the doctrine of the entire Psalm, and the verse which follows, “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous,” is intended to be the practical inference drawn from the whole of it. God would have His people believe that better times are in store for them, and, in the faith of the coming good, He would have them, even now, rejoice and be exceedingly glad. If you will read the Psalm you will notice that every verse may give us some strengthening of our faith as to the future blessedness of those that fear the Lord.

The first verse declares that “the Lord reigns.” Shall so righteous a One sit upon the Throne of God and shall not those that fear Him have their reward? If He is King, will He suffer His loyal subjects to endure damage? Will He not ultimately come to their rescue? The second verse tells us that “clouds and darkness are round about Him,” and this explains why, for the present, the upright in heart may seem to be forgotten. God’s dispensations are not always clear. It is His to conceal a thing. He wraps Himself about in mystery, for the brightness of His Glory is dark with excessive light. If His way is unsearchable and His design deep beyond human understanding, we need not be surprised if we find it so in the dispensations of His Providence towards His people.

But still, as the second verse continues, “righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne,” we may be certain, therefore, that He will not be unrighteous to forget our work of faith and labor of love—and that in dealing out judgment, both to His saints and to the ungodly—He will neither forget to reward the first nor to condemn the second. The third verse, which describes the Glory of the Divine power as displayed in deeds of vengeance, when the enemies of God are burnt up by fire, goes to prove that He will, with equal certainty, reward His people, for He who is stern to punish, surely will not be unrighteous to forget the gracious service of His saints!

If He has promised, He will be as certain to keep His promises as He has been to fulfill His threats. He will not be true on the black side towards the undeserving, and then be false on the bright side towards those who are made meritorious through the righteousness of His dear Son. He who keeps the thunder, and by-and-by will launch it from His hands, also reserves mercy for His chosen and favor for His people. Indeed, the sixth verse declares that the very constitution of the universe proves this—that every star twinkling in its sphere proclaims the righteousness and wisdom of God and therefore, since for Him to be righteous is for His people ultimately to be blessed, we conclude that “light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.”

With no other preface than this I shall take you at once to this very singular text, dwelling first upon the remarkable metaphor here used—sown light. And then, enlarging upon that metaphor, taking you to see the sowing, and thirdly, to survey and measure the field. Fourthly we will take an outlook upon the harvest in the future.

I. First, then, the metaphor is a rather singular one, and yet full of poetry—LIGHT IS SOWN. We can very soon catch the idea if we follow Milton in his speaking of the morning—

*“Now morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime*

*Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl.”*The sun, like a sower, scatters broadcast his beams of light upon the once dark earth. Look up at night upon the sky bespangled with stars, and it seems as though God scattered them like gold dust upon the floor of Heaven in picturesque irregularity, thereby sowing light!

Or if you need a fact which comes nearer to the sowing of light, more literally than anything which our poets have written, think of our vast beds of coal which are literally so much sown light. The sun shone upon primeval forests and the monstrous ferns grew and expanded under the quickening influence. They fell, as fall the leaves of chestnut and of oak in these autumns of our latter days—and there they lie stored deep down in the great cellars of nature for man’s use—so much sown light, I say, which springs up beneath the hand of man in harvests of flame—which flood our streets with light, and cheer our hearths with heat!

Sown light, then, is neither unpoetical nor yet altogether unliteral. There is such a thing as a matter-of-fact, and we may use the expression rightly enough, without grotesqueness of metaphor. Understand, then, that happiness, joy, gladness—symbolized by light—have been sown by God in fields that will surely yield their harvest for all those whom, by His Grace, He has made upright in heart.

Sown light signifies, first, that light has been diffused. That which is sown is scattered. Before sowing it was in the bag, or stored up in the granary—but the sowing scatters it along the furrows. There was happiness always in the mind of God. He is unspeakably blessed in Himself. We cannot dissociate the idea of Godhead from that of infinite delight. But all this happiness was nothing to us—we could not reach it. God might have been infinitely blessed—but we might have been shut up in Hell, gnawing our iron bonds in the desperation of unutterable agony. But in due time, according to the eternal purpose, God sowed happiness for His people.

He took it, as it were, out of Himself, and cast it broadcast in the fields of His eternal purposes. And in the decrees of His Divine Providence, that there might be a harvest, not for Himself—for He was happy enough—but for all those whom He gave to Christ, who are made righteous in His righteousness, and upright through His Spirit. Thank God, you who love Jesus and are resting upon His Atonement, that God’s happiness is not kept to Himself, but is diffused for you and the whole company of His elect! And that the pleasures which are at God’s right hand forevermore are not kept within their secret springs, but made to flow like a river— that you with all the blood-bought may drink to the full.

Seed that is sown is not in hand. After the farmer has scattered his wheat he cannot say, “Here it is.” It is out of sight. It is gone from him. You may walk over the fields for the next few weeks and see no trace of it. And fools might say, “Ah, now so much wheat is gone from him! He is so much the poorer—he has it not.” So the gladness which belongs to the righteous is not to be regarded as a thing of the present. Their great store of pleasure is yet to come—it is light that is sown, not light that now gleams upon their eyes! It is a gladness that has been buried beneath the clods for a special purpose—not a gladness which is now spread upon the table as bread that has been baked in the oven.

The Believer’s greatest happiness is not like bread ready for food—it is seed buried by the Sower. Brethren, let us remember that this world is not our rest—

*“We look for a city that hands have not piled,*

*We seek for a country by sin undefiled.”*  
To look for happiness here were to seek for the living among the dead! Christ is not here, for He has risen, and our joy is not here, for our joy has risen with Him! Seed sown, then, is not within sight. And the great bulk of the Christian’s happiness is not a thing of present enjoyment. It is not what he can see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and touch with the hands. It is a matter of faith. It is not to be feasted on today, but for a purpose it is withheld until Patience has had her perfect work and seen her joy blossom and bud, and open and ripen under the smile of the Lord her God.

As seed sown is not visible, so it is not expected that it shall be seen or enjoyed tomorrow. “The farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth.” Only little children put their seeds into the ground and then turn up the dirt to discover whether the seeds are growing in the morning. It is said of the northern nations, near the pole, and said truthfully, that they sowed their barley in the morning and reap it at night because the sun goes not down for four mouths at a time! But in sober truth we must not expect to have the rewards of Divine Grace given to us immediately as we believe.

This is the time for running—not for tarrying to gaze upon the prize. This is the hour for the battle—not yet may we rest on our laurels. There must be a trial of our patience and our faith. God delights that His servants should be put through many exercises and ordeals in order that the praise of the glory of His Grace may be manifest in them and through them to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Wait, then, Christian. Be content to wait. The Bridegroom comes quickly! Rest assured of that—and if you think He lingers, ask for greater patience that you may patiently work on, continuing steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Expect not your full reward of joy tomorrow. Your lot is on the other side of Jordan. The bells of your wedding day shall ring out in another world, and your coronation will be received in the ivory palaces upon which the sun has never shone. You are espoused to a Husband who is not here—you look for a kingdom far above these changeful skies! Have patience, then, till the great hour shall come and the King shall descend to take His own.

But while seed sown is not in sight, and is not expected to be seen tomorrow, yet it is not lost. No one but a person without sense would say that the farmer has lost so much of his capital when he has cast it in the form of seed-corn into the furrows. No, Sir, he reckons that he has gained when he has sown, for the seed in the granary was worth so much, but that in the furrow is worth so much more on account of the labor expended in the sowing. The farmer counts it gain to have sown his corn. He has transferred his treasure from one bank into another. He does not reckon that any of it has been lost.

So with the happiness of a Christian. We may today seem less happy than the gay worldling who flaunts himself in the sunlight of human approbation, but it is not a loss to renounce such inferior joys. The postponement of our joys—our waiting, our letting joy lay by at interest, our tarrying for a moment that our position may he the richer—when we come into our estate, is no loss! Joy self-denied is not lost. Lost, my Brothers and Sisters? Lost, the happiness of a single hour in which we have wept for sin! Lost, the happiness of a single moment in which we have suffered affliction for Christ’s sake through persecution and slander!

No, verily, it is put to our account and the record of it remains in the eternal archives against the day when the Judge of all the earth shall measure out the portions of His people. Corn sown is not lost, but is actually still in possession. If a farmer had to sell his field, he would, of course, ask much more for that in which the seed was sown than for one which was remaining fallow—because he counts that seed sown is still his own property. He cannot see it, but he knows it is there among those crumbling clods. He reckons that sown wheat, and puts it down in every inventory of his property. That seed which is under the soil is as certainly his as that which remains in the stack, or bound up in the sacks—and so you may reckon the joys of the hereafter as your own, and you ought so to reckon them—they are the best part of your estate!

They are yours, though you do not enjoy them. Yours today the seraph’s wing and the angel’s harp! Yours today the cherubic song and the bliss of the immortals! The Presence of the Lord, and the vision of His face! Come, count upon the resurrection, it is yours! Upon the glory that follows it, it is yours! Upon the millennium with all its splendor, it is yours! Upon eternity with its unutterable joys—all these things are yours, and you are Christ’s—and Christ is God's! You cannot see the heavenly light. You expect not to see it as yet, but, so far from being lost, it is yours this very day and you only need, by faith, to write it down upon the tablets of hope! Rejoice today that you are rich in infinite possessions!

Sown seed is in the custody of God. Jehovah is the farmer’s banker. Who can take care of those bags of wheat which have been thrown out from the hand during the last few weeks? Who, indeed, but the Covenant God who has said, “While the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, shall not cease”? There may come the rotting under the clods, the worm, the bird, the mildew, the blast—there may come the long drought or the too plenteous moisture—but the farmer has scarcely a hand in the future destiny of his wheat and barley—the crop remains with God.

You merchants may fancy you can do without the Lord, but the man who has to till the soil is obliged to feel, if he has any sense at all, his entire dependence upon the God of the rain clouds and the Lord of the sun. So, Beloved, here is our comfort! The light that is sown for the righteous is in the custody of God. Our future happiness and our eternal bliss are kept by the great Guardian of Israel who does neither slumber nor sleep! Be not afraid, therefore, that you shall lose your Heaven, for Christ keeps it for you! He has gone to take possession of it in your name, as your Representative, and He will not suffer any to rob you of your entailed heritage!

He will come a second time to take you to Himself to enjoy the portion which He has prepared for you. Oh, blessed fact, that the joys of the hereafter are in such keeping! Brethren, we have not to fight to maintain our rights in the eternal land! We have not to dispute in courts of law in order to maintain our claim to the everlasting inheritance. He is at the Father’s side, the Man of love, the Crucified, and He takes care that all shall be safe and well for the people of His eternal choice!

Light is sown for the righteous—that is to say it is put into the custody of Heaven, where it will be infallibly safe! A thing that is sown is not only put into God’s custody, but it is put there with a purpose—that it may come back to us greatly multiplied. The Believer gives up in this life his self-seeking. He suffers some degree of self-denial. He yields up his own boasts to trust in Christ’s righteousness. And he thereby makes a good bargain! What if he should be made poor by being honest, or if he should have to suffer through following Christ? The return, the reward, the recompense—these are so exceedingly abundant that the present light affliction is not worthy to be compared with it! We suffer for a moment that we may reign forever! We stoop for a second that we may be lifted up world without end! We shall get back the seed-corn multiplied 10,000s times 10,1000s, and we shall bless and magnify forever and ever the glorious Sower who sowed such a harvest for us!

The drift, the whole drift and meaning of this sown light is just this— that the righteous have their best things yet to come! God has begun very graciously with some of us. Indeed, so well that our loudest music falls flat compared with the praise which He deserves. And you are afraid, sometimes, that God will be worse in the future than He has been in the past? O think not so harshly of Him! You know what kind of feast the great Master makes! He does not bring forth His best wine first and then afterwards brings forth the worst. Oh, no! He puts upon His table the worst, if so I may say, first—good as that is—and then we may say of Him afterwards, “You have kept the best wine until now.”

The summers of our God do not begin with fervent heat and end with cold. God is not one who flatters us at the first to deal sternly with us at the last. We shall go from strength to strength, from good to something better, and until life’s happiness culminates in Heaven’s, we shall see more and more of the loving kindness of the Lord. Our best is yet to come, and the mercy that is to come will be always coming, until life’s end!

There is a story told of Rowland Hill which I have no doubt is true because it is so characteristic of the man’s eccentricity and generosity. Some one or other had given him 100 pounds to send to an extremely poor minister, but, thinking it was too much to send him all at once, he sent him five pounds in a letter with simply these words inside the envelope, “More to follow.” In a few days’ time, the good man had another letter by the post, and letters by the post were rarities in those days. When he opened it there was five pounds again, with just these words, “And more to follow.” A day or two after, there came another, and still the same words, “And more to follow.” And so it continued 20 times, the good man being more and more astounded at these letters coming thus by post with always the sentence, “And more to follow.”

Now, every blessing that comes from God is sent in just such an envelope, with the same message, “And more to follow.” “I forgive you your sins, but there’s more to follow.” “I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there’s more to follow.” “I adopt you into My family, but there’s more to follow.” “I educate you for Heaven, but there’s more to follow.” “I have helped you even to old age, but there’s still more to follow.” “I will bring you to the brink of Jordan, and bid you sit down and sing on its black banks—on the banks of the black stream—but there’s more to follow. In the midst of that river, as you are passing into the world of spirits, My mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be more to follow.”

Light is still sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.  
II. Secondly, having opened the metaphor of sown light, let us now speak of the SOWING itself. When were the happiness and security of the righteous sown for them? Answer—there are three great Sowers, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit—and all these have sown light for the chosen people. First, the Father. In long ages past, or ever the world was, it was in the Eternal mind to ordain unto Himself a people who should show forth His praise. In His august mind it was determined that although His loved ones should fall in Adam, they should be raised in Christ. That they should be chosen over and above all their fellows, and in spite of their sins should be loved with an everlasting love, should be kept in time, should be glorified in eternity!  
Now all those great decrees of God, of which He has revealed some inklings in His Word, were so much sowing of light for the righteous—so much provision of gladness in the future for the upright in heart! Yes, I venture to say that there was not a decree of God which in some way or other did not promote the happiness of His people—not a single Covenant provision, not a single purpose of eternal wisdom—but was intended and adapted to bring joy and peace to them! As all the rivers run into the sea, so all the purposes of God worked together for this great central purpose of His—that He might have an elect people in whom His name should be glorified.  
Think now for a moment, Beloved, of the thoughts of God to you. Long, I say, before the sun began to shine, what thoughts of love were in the bosom of the Father! Trace up the mercies of the present to those grand projects of the past, and praise and magnify the name of God that such unworthy sinners as we are should be the objects of such infinite conceptions! When the Covenant, at length, was formed between the Father, the Son, and the blessed Spirit—when the decree began to take shape and to be revealed—when in the volume of the Book, Covenant mercies were written down for us, all the tenure of that Covenant—every line, and jot and tittle was so much sowing of light for the righteous!  
Throughout the whole of that mysterious transaction in the cabinet chamber of eternity, when the Father pledged the Son, and the Son pledged the Father, and they entered into Covenant engagements, One with the Other, in their mysterious wisdom, every part of those stipulations, every grain of those engagements was made for a sowing of light for the righteous! And so, Beloved, when time had come when man had fallen, the first promise that was ever spoken sowed light for the righteous! When Jesus Christ was given of the Father His unspeakable gift, indeed, it was a sowing time of light for the saints, for in Him was light, and the light was the life of men!  
When the Father begets again unto a lively hope His people by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. When He adopts them into His family and calls them His sons and daughters. When He receives the wanderers into His bosom and feasts them at the table of His love, then, in all that, light is being sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart! Yes, and in the steering of the courses of the stars. In the ruling of the winds and tempests. In the government of nations—even in their crash, and in their fall, in the changes of events, and in all that comes from the right hand of the eternal God—light is always being sown by the great Father for the righteous whom He loves!  
A second great Sower was God the Son. He sowed happiness for His people when He joined with the Father in Covenant and promised to be the Substitute for His saints. But the actual sowing took place when He came on earth and sowed Himself in death’s dark sepulcher for us. Well did He Himself say, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone, but if it dies it brings forth much fruit.” He dropped Himself like a priceless seed-corn into the tomb—and what fruit He has brought forth let Heaven and all the blood-washed company declare! The flower that springs from His root is immortality and life!  
Jesus Christ has brought all manner of heavenly things unto His saints and made them rich to all the intents of bliss by the sowing of Himself as the life of His people. Nor must you think that He served us alone, and promoted our happiness only by His stripes and wounds, and bloody sweat and death. No, Beloved, when He rose from the dead, the fact of His Resurrection was a preparing and storing up of future blessedness for His redeemed. When He ascended up on high, leading our captivity captive, did He not then scatter gladness for us? And when He received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious also, did He not accomplish a boundless sowing of light for the elect people?! At this moment, standing as He does, the High Priest of our profession, pleading before the Majesty of Heaven, what are those pleadings but a sowing of happiness for us—a laying up of bliss which we possess today in measure and shall enjoy hereafter without measure in His Presence before the Throne?  
Beloved, let me remind you that in the government which Christ exercises as Mediator, even as Joseph governed Egypt for the sake of Israel, so does the Lord Jesus govern the world for the sake of His people. In everything that He does He has a design towards His elect ones. He may pause and wait with much longsuffering, bearing long with the ungodly, but in that delaying there is a sowing of light for the elect! Every hour of delay shall have its recompense. And when He comes—when the clouds of Heaven shall make Him a chariot and the doors of eternity shall be opened that He may go forth in all the pomp of His Glory to judge the earth—then in that day light shall still be sown! And forever and ever while Jesus Christ lives the friend and patron of His chosen, He shall forever be preparing fresh joy for them that love Him—such as eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man to conceive.  
Once more, the Holy Spirit is a third great Sower, sowing in another sense, sowing in a sense that comes nearer home to our experience. Light is sown for the righteous by the Holy Spirit. In the hour when He brought the Law home with its terrors, and laid us, broken and mangled at the feet of Moses, He was sowing light for us. Out humbling was the preface to our exultation. And we have already proved it so. In that moment when we were subdued, humbled, made to loathe our own righteousness, trampled into the very mire under a sense of weakness and death, He was sowing light for us.

We did not know it—we thought that our destruction was near at hand—but oh, those precious drops of penitent tears! Those blessed heartaches—what if I had said those priceless broken bones?—out of them has come, through Jesus Christ, our present joy and peace! It needed that we should be weaned from self. It was necessary that we should make the terrible discovery of our soul’s depravity. And as we passed through all that darkness and gloom of heart, the Holy Spirit was sowing for us our future perfection and glory at the right hand of Christ! Today that Blessed Spirit continues His sowing in us. Every gracious thought! Every stroke from the whip of affliction when sanctified! Every down-casting of our proud looks! Every discovery of our utter insignificance, worthlessness, and death—everything in us that harrows us, cuts us to the quick and wounds us, but yet brings us to the Good Physician that He may exercise His healing art—all these are sowing for us a blessed harvest of light for which we must wait a little while.  
Be thankful, Brothers and Sisters, for painful inward experiences. When they are most severe they are often most beneficial. Be grateful to God that thus, by His Spirit, He is making you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and in one word is sowing gladness for the upright in heart!  
Thus I have, as well as I could, shown you the Sowers.  
III. Now I shall occupy a few minutes by inviting you TO GO TO THE FIELD. God has sown happiness for His saints, but you must remember it is only sown. You are not to expect to see it grown up while you live this side of the moon. Now where are the fields that we may well say are sown by God’s Grace with happiness for us? Here is one field—the field of His Word. Ah, you may almost see the happiness here. We say the pearl is hidden in this field, but really it gleams upon the very surface!  
Every promise of God has a secret meaning beyond what we as yet have learned, and that hidden sense is full of happiness for the children of God. Every page here is intended to be for their comfort, for their lasting good— either in the form of instruction, rebuke, or edification. The whole Book, as we pass from field to field, and, as it were, climb over one stile and another, lies before us as so many broad and fertile acres—all sown with secret light for Believers.  
So it is with Providence. Every event which can occur is sown with light for the faithful. It does not appear so—far rather the fields just now are very unpleasant to look upon. The water stands deep in those broad furrows. You cannot imagine there will ever be a harvest in a land so flooded with trouble, but wait awhile. Providence may look very dark today, but it is full of light—latent light—light which must flash forth as the noonday for brightness. All circumstances are teeming with benefit to you if you are in Christ. Ships with black hulls are bringing you bright gold. Ravens shall bring you meat, and even devils shall be slaves to your service.  
There is not a dying child or an ailing wife. There is not a dishonored bill. There is not a wrecked vessel. There is not a burnt house. There is not a single diseased bullock but what you shall see at the last, and perhaps before then, to have been full of real blessing for you. There is not only mercy in God’s dealings with His people in the gross, but in the detail. All the Providence of God, far reaching as it is—and extending from our cradle to our tomb—is full of the Divine intent that His children shall be blessed, and blessed they shall be!  
You have sometimes read, I daresay, with wonder, that instance of Balaam trying to curse the people of God. He offered his seven bullocks and his seven rams, and went first to one hill and then to another, to look at them from different quarters that he might be able to say a word against them. But every time that mouth of his was compelled to utter a blessing. And it is so with the great enemy of our souls. Sometimes we are tried with poverty—then he tries to curse us with envy. Then we are tried with wealth—and he would curse us with pride. But from whatever quarter of the compass he may endeavor to bring an imprecation upon God’s people, the only result shall be their greater blessing, for “God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent: has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” Beloved, the field of the Word and the field of Providence are both sown with light.  
There is one little field called, “God’s Acre,” which to some here present appears to be sown with much darkness, but is really sown with light— that sleeping place, the cemetery—where your loved ones lie beneath the sod. Yes, but they shall rise again, and so light is sown for you, even in the moldering bones of your beloved children and friends. You would not have it otherwise, would you? Would you lose that seed? Imagine, for a moment, that it should never come up again from the sepulcher? Would not that grieve you beyond measure? It is your comfort to feel that these dry bones shall live, and all the band of those you loved so dearly who have gone from you for awhile, are not lost, but gone on ahead of you.  
“Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears: for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.” And what a happy meeting! What joyous greetings, what blessed reunions, when they meet to part no more! In that, “God’s Acre,” then, in the many burials we have attended, light is sown for the righteous!  
Beloved, light is sown for the righteous, even upon earth. I mean there is a glory promised to the Church of God even upon this earthly globe. Time shall speed its flight and the day shall come of the Master’s ultimate triumph. The millennial age is certainly foretold, and faithfully covenanted by the promise of God. Then the martyr’s blood shall be rewarded. Then the ashes of the saints shall prove to have been good seed-corn scattered to the winds, but vital in every atom. The day is coming when the monarchs of the earth shall yield their thrones to Jesus, and the gods that now do reign over mankind shall be cast away as ignoble things to the moles and to the bats! Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Glory of their Father.  
What will be the bliss of a faithful servant of God at his Master’s coming? It is not mine to give you fancy pictures, but to remind you of those words of the Master that if we have been faithful in few things, He will make us ruler over many things. We shall be on earth kings and priests unto our God, and shall reign with Him. In the very land of persecution, rebuke, slander, and of scorn, the righteous shall put on their crowns and shall walk in white with their Lord, for they are worthy! Light is sown for the righteous.  
But I must ask you now to look beyond your cemeteries, and to look beyond this poor narrow world. What is this earth but a mere speck? Look into eternity! Can your minds conceive it? Eternity! Duration without boundary! The whole of that boundless region is sown with light for you! Think of a prairie in America, a sea of grass. Think of it all plowed and tilled, and sown with wheat, and all yours! How rich would you be? But what are the prairies compared with the plains of Heaven? And what the finest corn compared with Heaven’s light? All far away through all the ages of ages—when this world has been consumed with fervent heat, when sun and moon have passed away like lamps blown out because the night is over—there shall still be an up-springing of never-ending blessedness for you!  
Eternity is sown with light for you. The Godhead shall be yours with all its infinity ministering to your delights. The Lord Himself shall be your portion! The God of Israel shall be your endless heritage! Brothers and Sisters, what more can I say? We cannot possibly measure the great fields that are sown for us! So let us thank God and take courage, and go on our way believing that we have fields already sown everywhere, and we must wait awhile before we shall reap the harvest.  
IV. The last head is the FUTURE, but it shall occupy only a second or two, as I must close with a practical application. The future. That is always in the farmer’s eye when the teams go out to plow, and when the sower’s baskets are filled with corn. He thinks of next July or August, and the “Harvest Home,” and the going to market with the yellow grain. So ought we always to have our eyes upon the future, having respect unto the recompense of the reward.  
Today is all sowing, but we do not know how soon the reaping will begin. “As the Lord lives,” said one, “there is but a step between you and death.” And it may be only a step to any of us, for the Lord may descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God—and may at once begin to reap. But what a reaping! O my Soul, what an eternal satisfaction to you to be forever with the Lord! One glimpse of His dear face on earth has ravished you, but what must it be forever without a veil between to gaze into that Beloved Countenance, and to feel His love shed abroad in your heart, and your heart plunged as into a sea of that love ineffable?  
Beloved, it is but a mere film of time that divides us from our expected portion. Those of us who are still young and in good health should remember, and remember with great satisfaction, that if we are spared for 40 years, yet they are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. And while you who are getting gray and have reached your threescore years and ten, you may be glad that with you it can be but a few more revolving moons, the passing away of a few more Sabbaths, and you shall be forever with the Lord!  
Come, come, murmur not! If the inn is not so comfortable as flesh desires, you are not to tarry long in it, you are on your journey home, and the cry is, “Up and away!” What if the way is rough? Your face is turned

 Zionward! The road cannot be long—so smooth it with hope and cheer it with song! You are not like those unhappy creatures, some of whom are present here, whose life has been a sowing of darkness. They have leagues of thistles to reap—acres upon acres of briers and thorns of which they will have to make their bed forever. They have been sowing the wind, and they will have to reap the whirlwind which will carry their guilty souls forever in its dreadful tornadoes.  
O you who have never had light sown for you because you have never sought mercy through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit has never renewed your hearts and made you righteous, think of what your fate will be! You will be like the farmer who sowed not in the seed-time and therefore reaps not in the time of harvest. Naked, poor, miserable, destitute and forsaken, you will beg in harvest—but you shall have nothing. You will ask God, then, to have mercy upon you, but He will refuse you. You shall clamor for the benefits of His Divine Grace, but they shall be denied you, for He will not hear you when once life is over. If we hear Him not today, neither will He hear us tomorrow. O for Divine Grace to have a seedsowing here that we may have a reaping forever and ever!  
I shall close by observing that the doctrine of our text ought to be very, very comforting to all of us who are in Christ. Sufferer, your pains are sharp—bear them manfully and repine not, for there is light springing up for you. “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Poor man, working hard for a little, with many needs and sufferings, light is sown for you! You shall soon dwell in the City of the many mansions! You shall walk the golden streets of the pearly-gated City where poverty is banished forever! “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”  
Slandered one, whose name is cast out as evil for Christ’s sake—bear it with rejoicing—light is sown for you! Amidst the martyrs and the throng of the chosen who suffered for righteousness’ sake, you shall reap the sheaves of Glory—reap them world without end! And you who have to suffer more than slander, who lose friend and home for Christ’s sake—rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven—for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you—those ancient witnesses have reaped the light and are reaping it, and even so shall you when worlds shall pass away!  
The Lord give Divine Grace us to forget the present—to rejoice in the future—and to count the reproach of Christ greater treasure than all the riches of Egypt! Amen and amen!

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THE NEW SONG  
NO. 496

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 28, 1862, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“O sing unto the Lord a new song. For He has done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.” Psalm 98:1.**

THERE must be new songs on new occasions of triumph. It would have been absurd for Miriam with her timbrel to conduct the music of the daughters of Israel to some old sonnet that they had learned in Egypt. No, an old song could not have spoken out the feelings of that generation, much less could it have served to utter a voice, the jubilant notes of which distant posterity should echo. They must have a new song while they cry the one unto the other, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

The like had never been known before, but from now on, father to son must show forth its fame in after times. When Deborah and Barak had routed the hosts of Sisera, they did not borrow Miriam’s song. They had a new Psalm for the new event. They said, “Awake, awake, Deborah. Awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam.” In after years, at the building of the Temple, or on the solemn feast days, it was ever the custom of the inspired poets of the age to cry, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord a new song.”

Thus the grateful notes of praise have gathered volume and augmented their compass as the ages have rolled onwards. And these, as it were, only the rehearsals for a grand oratorio! What then shall be the marvelous novelty, and the matchless glory of that song which shall be sung at the last upon Mount Zion, when ten thousand times ten thousand of the warriors of God shall surround Jesus the Conqueror? When we shall hear a voice from Heaven as the voice of many waters, and like great thunders, when shall be heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps?

What shall be, I say, the strange novelty of that new song which they shall sing before the Truth of God, when the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures shall fall before God upon their faces and worship Him forever and ever? Would that our ears could anticipate that tremendous burst of, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.”

I want to carry your minds, tonight, if I can, for a little season to that last and grandest song—at the decisive victory—which shall proclaim the name and fame of Jehovah in all His mighty attributes, and sing of all His

majestic deeds—when the battle shall be over forever! When the banner shall be furled and the sword shall be sheathed. When the last foe shall be destroyed, and placed beneath the feet of the Almighty Victor. “His right hand, and His holy arm have Him the victory.” My text seems, however suitable it may be to other occasions, to be most fitting to that last and most splendid triumph.

Three things there are in it— victory transcendent. Deity conspicuous. Holiness glorified.  
I. First in our text we perceive very clearly VICTORY TRANSCENDENT. What shall we say of that victory? The shouts thereof already greet our ears, and the anthem that celebrates it is already prepared! When all the principalities and powers of this world shall be laid low, the pride of earth shall burst like a bubble, and the great globe itself shall dissolve. And the things that are seen shall be folded up like a vesture, worn out and crumbled with decay—that victory will be transcendent. There shall be none comparable to it. It shall stand matchless and unrivalled in all the wars of God, of angels, or men.  
Well, we must say of that victory, there shall be none to dispute the claim of God the Most High. The most splendid victories of one army have frequently been claimed by the opposite partisans. If you stand beneath the triumphal arch in Paris, you will see the names of some battles which you simple-minded Englishmen always thought had been won by British soldiers. But you discover that our history was all a mistake, and that the Frenchmen really retired victorious from the plain.  
I suppose in America it is always difficult to ascertain who has been the conqueror. And where there are no generals, and the whole affair seems to be which shall kill the most and wade through the most blood, there naturally must be difficulty in ascertaining who has won the day. But in this case there shall be no dispute whatever. The dragon’s head shall be so completely broken that he can do nothing but bite his iron bonds and growl out his confession that God is stronger than he is.  
The hosts of Hell shall have been so utterly routed that the deep groans of dismay, and shrieks of terror shall be the confession that Omnipotence rules their terrible doom. As for Death, it is when he shall see his captives all loosed before his eyes. As for the grave, the key shall be rent from her grip, and all her treasures plucked from her grasp—death and the grave shall both acknowledge that their victory is gone forever! Christ has been the conqueror, the Son of God who in our nature has already taken away the sting.  
There may be today some who write their names down as Atheists. There may be others who openly avow that they are the adversaries of God. And throughout the universe there are never wanting those who are hopeful that the issue will turn out as they wish—they are hopeful that wrong will master right—that evil shall drive out good, and darkness extinguish light. But there shall not be one such being left on that great day of victory. It shall be acknowledged even by the lips of despair that the Lord God, “with His own right hand, and His holy arm has gotten Him the victory.”  
Blazoned across the sky in lightning such as the eye of terror has never beheld before—thundered out with trumpet louder than even that which startled the sleeping dead—every tongue in earth and Hell shall confess, because every ear has heard, that the Lord reigns and is king forever and ever.  
But further, as this victory will be certainly beyond all dispute, let me remind you it will be transcendent, because there shall be nothing that can occur to mar it. When the last shock of the dread artillery shall have been endured by the hosts of God’s elect. When the last charge shall have driven the foes before them as thin clouds fly before a Biscay gale. Then, as the heroes sit down to read the story of the war, they shall discover that there is nothing to mar the splendor of that glory, for it has been a victory throughout.  
Of all other victories we read, at one time the balance trembled— sometimes the host on this side wavered. Perhaps for the first half day it seemed not only doubtful which would win, but it appeared as though the adversary at length defeated would certainly be the conqueror. But, Beloved, when we shall read history in the light of Heaven, we shall discover that God was never conquered—that never did the ranks reel. We shall see that even the most disastrous strokes of Providence—even the most dire calamities that ever occurred to the Church—were only the march, the tramp of victories yet to come. I am certain that those things we most deplore today will even become the subjects of the most marvelous gratitude tomorrow.

We look today upon the black side of the question, and say, “Ah, here, indeed, goodness was foiled.” But when we look at the whole matter through, we shall see that every dark and bending line meets in the center of the Divine plan. And that which seemed the most incongruous and out of place with its fellow, was the most fitting and the most necessary of the whole program. Satan at the last shall not be able to put his finger upon any spot of the battlefield and say, “Here my hosts routed the troops of Emmanuel.”  
Everywhere it shall be seen that, from the dawning day, when first he struck the blow at Eve, and made her sin, to the very last, when Christ shall drag him up the everlasting hills, led captive at His chariot wheels— from the first to the last—the Lord’s “right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”  
Remember, too, that this is a victory all along the line. The general’s cautious eye marks that there the left wing has driven the adversary back. But for that right wing, bring up the reserves, let not the ranks be broken. Stern liners, let your chivalry be seen yonder for that wing reels. Generally in the battle some part must fail, while in this portion, or the other, there shall be success. Ah, but at the last when Christ shall stand and bare His brow in Heaven’s sunlight, and all His angels shall be with Him, it shall be seen that they were everywhere triumphant.  
The blood on Madagascar’s rocks shall not defeat the march of God’s armies. Saints may be burned, may be sawn in sunder, may wander about in sheep skins and goat skins, but they shall be victorious everywhere. Spain may shut her gates against the Gospel, and the inquisition may make that place its stronghold, but as sure as there is a God in Heaven, Christ shall be conqueror there. Tyrants may pass edicts to exterminate Christians, conclaves may make decrees to drive out the religion of Jesus—but in every place, in every land, where ever foot of man has trod this green earth—shall there be victory!  
From the north to the south, from the east to the west, everywhere shall be triumph—China and Japan, Brazil and Chili, the islands of the south, the frozen regions of the north. Even Africa with her sable sons, the dwellers in the wilderness, shall bow before Him and lick the dust at His feet. There shall be victory all along the line. Not from one place merely, but from all, shall be heard the tune—“His own right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”  
And it shall be a victory sustained by the news of the morrow. Not so among the embattled hosts of men. How hard to brook the morrow! Then the general’s brow is dark, and his eye is heavy, for the list of the dead and wounded is brought in for inspection. “Another victory like this,” says one, “and I am defeated forever. It is dearly purchased,” he says, “with the blood of these mothers’ sons. My comrades and companions in arms must bite the ground to let the country live.” But in that last great battle of God the muster roll shall be found without one missing in it!  
As they call their names they shall all answer. There shall not be one left dead upon the field. “How so? How so?” says Unbelief. “Are they not dead and buried now? Have not their bodies lain to bleach upon the side of the Alps? Have they not been burned in the fire, and scattered as ashes to the four winds? Do not the saints sleep today in our cemeteries, and in our graveyards, and does not the deep engulf full many a body that was a temple of the Holy Spirit?”  
I answer, yes, but they shall come again. Refrain your eyes from weeping, O daughter of Jerusalem! Refrain your heart from sorrow, for they shall come again from the land of their captivity. We that are alive and remain, shall not have the preference beyond them that sleep. “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. And we shall be changed. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” “His right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”  
And sometimes, on the morrow, the general feels the glory of the victory is marred, for there are many prisoners. They are not dead, their corpses lie not on the field, but they have been taken off by the opposite parties and they are a prey. And who knows what may become of them? What dungeons may contain them? To what tortures they may be put? But in this last victory of God, there shall be no prisoners, no prisoners left in the hand of His enemy. I know there are some who say that we may be children of God, and yet fall from Grace and perish. My Brothers and Sisters, it is a foul slander upon the faithfulness and power of the Redeemer. I know that all He undertakes to save, He will save. And He will bring the troops off from the battlefield, every brow crowned with laurel, not one slain, not one a prisoner.  
The gates of Hell shall never enclose the ransomed of the Lord. Among the groans of the lost there shall never be heard a sigh from one that was once a saint before God. There are no prisoners. March out your prisoners, Prince of Hell! Bring forth, if you can, one soul that Jesus bought with blood. One soul that the Spirit quickened, one soul that the Eternal Father gave to the hands of the Great Surety to keep forever—bring him Forth! Ah, you have none. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?” Thus says the Lord, the God of Hosts, “My ransomed shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.” Then shall it be said, “His right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”  
But, Beloved, after the battle is over, the conqueror wipes his brow and says, “Ah, but the scattered hosts may rally. And they who were driven today like chaff before the wind, may rise again. And then long may be the campaign, and fierce the struggle before we have stamped out the sparks of war. Sleep on your arms,” says he, “you may be attacked tomorrow. Be ready for the cry of ‘boot and saddle,’ for there may be a charge again before many hours are spent.” But not so in this case—the victory is crushing, total, final. It is once forever with evil, with darkness, with Hell. They shall never again be able to tempt the righteous, or to cast them down, or to pale their cheeks with fear.  
They shall never be able again to win the world to their dominion. They are routed, routed, routed forever. Hosts of evil, it is not your heel that is bruised—your head is broken. The Lord has used His people as His battleaxe and His weapons of war. And He has cleft you and left you without might or strength forever and forever. So, dear Friends, this is our joy and comfort—that once the battle is over—the whole campaign is ended. There shall be no further onslaughts. We rest eternally—we triumph everlastingly. No more fights to risk, no more conflicts in which to tug and strive. This shall be the note that shall ring throughout the arches of eternity—“The Lord’s right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory forever and forever.”  
I think these are two good reasons why I should say this victory is transcendent—there is none to dispute it, and there is nothing to mar it. But yet further we will venture to enlarge upon this victory by showing its particulars. The ultimate triumph and victory of God in all His purposes will lie in several things. How glorious the fact that all whom He ordained to save are saved! Calling was the first work which He worked in them. They were called, everyone of them, but like the rest of mankind they would not come. Their wills were so desperate that they resisted long. The minister preached at them. Their mother wept over them. Their father entreated them.  
Providence came and hewed them. Afflictions broke them in pieces, and they were unsaved still. But not in one case where God ordains to call has the calling failed. In every case where His electing love has set its purpose, the will is turned round, the affections yield, the judgment gives way, the man is subdued. He is called, he is quickened. There may be some such here tonight, who think, “Well, I never would be saved upon such terms as acknowledging the Sovereign Grace of God, even if He wills to do it.” Your will must give way before the crushing force of the will of God. He has mysterious ways of finding an entrance into the most reluctant heart and taking up His throne there forever.  
How clearly is this victory seen in the subjugation of the lusts and passions of the called sinner! He may have been a drunkard, he thought he could not give it up, but the rod of iron “dashes in pieces the potter’s vessel.” He may have loved the pleasures of the flesh, they were as dear to him as his right eye, but Divine Grace overcame the most darling lust, and threw to the earth the most pampered sin.  
Not less conspicuously will it appear in the perseverance of every saint. Not a stone will have been left unturned by the adversary to prevent the saints holding on. The caverns of Hell will be emptied against God’s redeemed. Satan and his faithful followers will do their utmost to cast them down to destruction, but they shall hold on their way. They shall wax stronger and stronger, until at last the gates of Heaven shall be fast closed. And because there are no more to enter, it shall be proclaimed, while devils bite their iron bands in shame, that not a soul who was written in the Book of Life was lost.  
Not one whom Jesus bought with blood has been unredeemed. Not one quickened by Divine Grace suffered to die. Not one who truly began the heavenly race turned aside from it. Not one concerning whom it was said, “These are Mine, and in the day when I make up My jewels they shall be Mine,” not one of these is lost, but all saved, saved eternally. Oh, that will be a splendid victory! What can be greater? You that know the conflict through which the child of God has to pass will bear me witness that if you get to Heaven, you will sing with all your might the conqueror’s hymn!

And I think we all should do the same. I remember saying once that if ever I got to Heaven I would sing the loudest there, for I owed the most to Sovereign Grace. But when I came downstairs, one said to me, “You made a mistake, I shall sing more loudly than you, for I owe more than you do.” And I found that was the general opinion, that each Brother and each Sister thought that he owed most to Divine Grace. Now, if we are all to sing loudest, what a shout of triumph there will be! And I suppose the verse in our hymn is quite true to the apprehension of each of us—  
*“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,*

*While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”*

What a transcendent triumph! Not a few shall there be to share the triumph, but a multitude that no man can number. The glory shall be enhanced by the salvation of so many. Heaven is none of your narrow places for narrow-hearted bigots. No, Brothers and Sisters, our largest imagination never yet could grasp Heaven, but it will hold multitudes of multitudes. Nor will the praise be any the less, when we consider that there were so many of such varied clans and climes, some of all kindreds on the face of the earth, swarthy or white. There shall be found in Heaven the vilest sinner that lived. There shall be brought there the proudest rebel, and the stoutest hearted, and the most obstinate of sinners!

There shall be such in Heaven as would have made a wonder in Hell! Some, I say, who would have been such great sinners, had they been suffered to go to Hell, that their dreadful fall would even Hell itself appall, but they are in Heaven, saved by Sovereign Grace. And, O Beloved! As there are such persons, this will help to make the victory grand, that they were saved by such means, such simple means, by the simple preaching of the Gospel. Not by wisdom, not by science, not by eloquence—but by the simple telling out of the story of the Cross. How this will tend to make the triumph brighter than it could have been in any other way!

And, O Beloved, this victory will excel all others in the routing of such foes, such cruel, such crafty, such mighty, such numerous foes. Sin, sin, it is a name of horror—sin overthrown. Death—what glooms are concentrated in that word! Death destroyed. Satan—what craft, what cruelties, what malice linger there—Satan bound hand and foot and led captive. Such a victory over such foes! I find no words in any tongue by which I can describe its magnitude.

And oh, the results of that victory! How bright! Souls knit to Christ by such love, tongues tuned to such music, hearts burning with such fire, Heaven filled with such devout, such holy inhabitants, the ears of Deity regaled with such grateful music, Heaven filled with such myriads of happy spirits! The peaceful results, setting aside the overthrow, will be enough to make this victory more grand than all the triumphs of men or angels put together.

Say now, and gather up all your enthusiasm to say it—What a victory shall that be, when there shall not be a single trophy in the hands of the adversary. The victory shall be unparalleled in this, that all the success which the enemy thought he had achieved shall only tend to make his defeat the more galling and add luster to the victorious King of kings. You see sometimes, hanging up in old Churches, tattered flags that were taken from the adversary. Sometimes when the report of battle comes in, we are told the battle was won, that so many cannon and so many flags were left with the enemy.

But, O Lord God! You have not left a single trophy in the hands of Your foe. I said he had no prisoners, but he shall not even have a flag—not one truth rent in pieces, not one doctrine of Revelation hung up to rot in the shacks of Hell—not one single attribute of God that shall be trailed in the mire. Not one single truth of Christianity to be laughed at and despised by Fiends—not a trophy. There shall not a hair of your head perish, not so much as that shall Satan gain, not a bone, not a fragment of the saint, either of his body or his spirit—no trophies left.

And all this will make Hell angry, to think that God gave Satan vantage ground, let him contend with poor feeble men. But God was in man and fought with Satan—man, a poor feeble worm, fought with Satan, and, like David, he threw the stone of faith at the giant’s head and destroyed him with his own weapons. God has destroyed death by the death of Christ, destroyed sin by the great Sin Bearer. Yes, He has destroyed the dragon by the Seed of a woman, who bruised his head with that very Seed whose heel the serpent once did bite. Glory be unto You, O Lord! This is Your victory. The more we muse upon it, the higher does our rapture rise, and the more prepared do our hearts grow to peal forth the words of the Psalmist, “His right hand, and his holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”

II. Secondly, observe that DEITY IS CONSPICUOUS HERE. Man is not made mention of. There is no name of Moses, or of the Prophets, or of the Apostles here. I read not the names of Chrysostom and Augustine, nor of those modern fathers of the Church, such as Calvin and Zwingle—the stars are lost in the blaze of the Sun. O God! How glorious is Your right arm, and how do Your disciples, Your children, hide their heads and say, “Not unto us, but unto Your name be all the glory!”

But mark, Beloved, as they are not mentioned, it is not because the mention needs to be avoided, for the more we talk of instrumentalities, or rather think about them—(I do not say the more we think of them, but the more we think about them)—the more persuaded we shall be that it only adds to God’s Glory to use men—for men are such poor tools to work with. You have heard of the celebrated painter who gained renown by painting with poor brushes, when the good ones were stolen. And Quintin Matsys, who made a cover for the well without tools, when all the proper tools were taken away—he worked the ironwork with such poor implements as he could get.

So was the skill of the painter or artisan admired, in that he could produce such effects under such disadvantageous conditions. Ah, then what an artist must he be, they exclaim, concerning the one. And they look upon this piece of ironwork, and say of the other, “What? No engraving tools, no casting, how could he do it?” So when we shall come to look at men, when we look at them in the light which eternity shall reveal, we shall say of the best of them, “How can the Lord have won such victories with such poor things as these?”

You may mention the instruments, every one of them, from righteous Abel down to the last preacher of the Word—and yet it shall be true, that the victory shall speak the sole praise of the General. No doubt, dear Friends, this will be a part of the splendor of the triumph, to think that He did win by man. It was in man that Satan conquered—Adam and Eve were led astray by the crafty wiles of Satan. It is by man that death came, and by man comes the resurrection of the dead. This will be gall and wormwood in the cup of the lost, when they shall see the Man, Christ Jesus, the Seed of the woman, sitting at the right hand of God.

This is judgment’s greatest terror, “Hide us from the Lamb.” And this shall be Hell’s greatest horror, “Hide us from the Lamb, let us not behold His face.” But glory be unto You, most gracious God, for You have lifted man up above all the works of Your hands, and given him dominion above all creatures. You put principalities and powers beneath his feet in the Person of Christ. And all this only proves that, “His own right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”

I wish I might enlarge here and speak of the conspicuous glory of God in this respect, that all the Persons of the Trinity will be glorified, the Father, the Son, the Spirit. All the attributes of God, His unsearchable greatness, and His unrivalled majesty, His Grace, His power, His Truths, His justice, His holiness, His immutability—these shall shine forth with resplendent luster. His wondrous works, and His terrible acts shall declare His praise. They shall be the theme of every tongue, and the topic of every conversation. “Men shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power.”

All His decrees shall be seen in their final accomplishment, every one of them fulfilled, the counsel answering to the Providence. Of all that the Father willed, of all that the Son performed, of all that the Spirit revealed, not one thing is frustrated. How shall I gather up these things? O for the voice of a mighty angel! O for a seraph’s lip of fire, to speak now of the splendor of that last day, when not only the great but the little, not only the abundance of God’s Providence and the great deeps of His counsel, but even the small deeds of His loving kindness shall be made to sing forth His praise! When not only the leviathan deeds of God shall make the deep to praise the Lord, but even the little fish that move therein shall leap up to join the chorus, and everywhere from everything, for everything, there shall be heard the tune—“His right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”

III. We have in our text a third thought, which we can only hint at in all this—HOLINESS WILL BE GLORIFIED.  
Note the adjective—“His holy arm.” When we contemplate any actions of God, you will notice that the name which cherubs utter, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,” is always brought out. Where Christ bears sin and overcomes it, I hear the cry of, “Holy, holy, holy,” from the Cross. Where Jesus breaks the tomb and conquers death, I seem to hear the note of, “Holy, holy, holy,” for it makes the day holy on which the deed was done. And when He ascends to Glory and the Father says, “Well done,” we seem to hear, still, the note, “Holy, holy, holy.”  
In everything, from the Manger to the Cross, and from the Cross onward to the Crown, holiness becomes God’s House and all God’s acts forever. Is it not, dear Friends, after all, the hinge of the struggle? Is not this the point, just as you know in great battles, there is some one mountain or hill, which is the object of struggle? Not for the value of that particular hill, but because on that the battle will depend—so holiness is just the point—the rallying point between God and Satan. Here are the two war cries. The hosts of evil cry, “Sin, sin, sin,” but the cry of the armies of the Lord of Hosts is this, “Holiness, holiness, holiness.”

Every time we strike a blow it is “Holiness.” And every time they attack us it is “Sin.” Sin is the real object of their aim. When Satan attacks, it is to stab at holiness. And when we resist, it is to guard holiness, or to drive back sin. Mark this, I say—this is the point of the battle, and by that you shall be able to judge on which side you are. What is your war cry? What is your war cry? When Cromwell fought with the Soldiers of the Covenant at Dunbar, you will remember they were distinguished by their cries. On the one side, “The Covenant, the Covenant,” and on the other side, “The Lord of Hosts, the Lord of Hosts.”  
And so tonight there is the cry on either side, “Sin and the pleasures of sin.” Is that your war cry, Friend? You say “No.” How is it, then, you were at the theater the other night? You say “No.” How is it, then, you frequent the tavern? You say “No.” How is it, then, you have got so many illicit gains about you now? You say, “No.” How is it you make appointments for deeds of sin, and perhaps tonight, or tomorrow night, intend to fulfill them? I tell you, Sirs, there are many of you whose war cry tonight is, “Sin and the pleasures of sin.”  
On the other hand, I trust there are not a few in this vast throng, who can say, “Oh, Sir, feebly though I speak it, yet my war cry is, ‘Holiness and the Cross.’ ” Ah, Beloved, you are just now on the side that is laughed at—the world points at you and says, “There are your saints.” Yes, here they are, Sir, what do you dare say against them? Abide your time, Man, and have your jeering out—you shall change that laugh for everlasting howling by-and-by. “There are your Methodists. There are your hypocritical Professors.” What, Sir, dare you say it? The servants of the living God will know how to answer you in that day, when their King shall be revealed in the clouds of Heaven, and His glory shall be manifest—and they shall share His triumph, and all flesh shall see it—for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.  
The world knows us not, because it knew Him not. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear, we shall be like He is, for we shall see Him as He is.” Come, we will pass that question again tonight, “What is your war cry?” There has been a good deal of wickedness these last few days in London. I love to see holy mirth. I delight to see men well feasted. I like Christmas. I wish it came six times a year. I like the generosity of those who give to the poor. Let it be extended. I would not stop a smile. God forbid me! But cannot men be happy without drunkenness? Cannot they be mirthful without blasphemy?  
Is there no possibility of being happy without lasciviousness? Are there no other ways of finding true pleasure besides selling your soul to the devil? O Sirs! I say there have been thousands in this huge city who have been going about the streets and whose cry has been, “Sin and the pleasures of sin! Where is the music hall? Where is the Casino? Where is the coal hole? Where is the tavern? Where is the ballroom? Sin and the pleasures of sin.” O Satan! You have many soldiers, and right brave soldiers they are! They are never afraid of your cause, nor ashamed of your name, nor of your unholy work. Yes, you are well served, O Prince of Hell! And rich will be your wages when your drudges earn the fire for which they have labored.  
But I hope and trust there are some tonight who will change their war cry. You have not nailed your colors to the mast, have you? Even if you have, by God’s Grace, I would pull the nails out. Are you determined to die? Will you serve the Black Prince forever, and perish with him? Jesus Emmanuel, the Captain of our salvation, bids me cry to you, “Enlist beneath My banner.” Believe in Him, trust in Him, and live! Oh, trust the merits of the Cross, the virtue of the blood, the tears and the dying groans. This it is to be a Christian, and ever afterwards this shall be your war cry—“Holiness, and the Cross!”  
O take this, all! Fear not. The Cross with holiness will bring the mortifying of the flesh, the shame of the world, and the reproach of men. Take both, for now the battle is raging. But, O my Brothers and Sisters, another crush, and another, and another, and another, and we shall gain the top of the hill, and the shout of, “Holiness and the Cross!” shall be answered by the echoes all round the world, for everywhere holiness shall be victorious, and men shall know the Lord. Yes, and the echoes of Heaven shall answer, too, and the spirits of the sanctified shall cry, “Holiness and the Crown!”  
Then we will not change one word of our war cry. And as our enemies have broken before us, and are utterly destroyed—as they melt away like the fat of rams—as unto smoke they consume away, we will sing forever, “Holiness and the Crown! Holiness and the Crown!” But that shall be only one note—this shall be the song—“His own right hand, and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.”  
I would that some soul would believe in Jesus tonight, that it might share in the victory. I would that young man’s heart would be given to Christ tonight, or yours yonder. He deserves it of you—if it were only His mercy in having spared you, He deserves it. And you gray headed sinner there, does He not deserve your heart for sparing you so long? Yield, I pray you! His love meets you. Yield! His terrors threaten you. Yield! Lay down your weapons, and be forever forgiven!  
May God help you to do it. May the Lord prove His sovereignty and His power tonight in the conversion of many of His chosen. And unto Him shall be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3086 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“MARVELOUS THINGS”  
NO. 3086

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1908.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 7, 1874.

**“O sing unto the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things: His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory. The LORD has made known His salvation: His righteousness has He openly showed in the sight of the heathen.” Psalm 98:1, 2.**

THE invitations of the Gospel are invitations to happiness. In delivering God’s message, we do not ask men to come to a funeral, but to a wedding feast! If our errand were one of sorrow, we might not marvel if men refused to listen to us. But it is one of gladness, not sadness—in fact, you might condense the Gospel message into this joyous invitation—“O come and learn how to sing unto the Lord a new song! Come and find peace, rest, joy and all else that your souls can desire. Come and eat that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” When the coming of Christ to the earth was first announced, it was not with sad sonorous sounds of devil spirits driven from the nethermost Hell, but with the choral symphonies of holy angels who joyfully sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” And as long as the Gospel shall be preached in this world, its main message will be one of joy. The Gospel is a source of joy to those who proclaim it, for unto us who are less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given—that we should preach among the Gentiles the

unsearchable riches of Christ! [Mr. Spurgeon enlarged upon this theme in two Sermons on Ephesians 3:8. [See Sermons #745, Volume 13—THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST and #1209, Volume 20—A GRATEFUL SUMMARY OF TWENTY VOLUMES—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Gospel is also a source of

joy to all who hear it aright and accept it, for its very name means “glad tidings of good things.” I feel that if I am not able to preach to you as I would, yet am I thrice happy in being permitted to preach at all. And if the style and manner of my address may not be such as I desire them to be, nor such as you will commend, yet it will matter but little, for the simplest telling out of the Gospel is of itself a most delightful thing! And if our hearts were in a right condition, we would not merely be glad to hear of Jesus over and over again, but the story of the love of our Incarnate God and of the redemption worked by Immanuel would be the sweetest music that our ears ever heard!

In the hope that our hearts may thus rejoice, I am going to talk of many things under two heads. The first is, the marvelous things which God has done in the Person of His Son and, secondly, some marvelous things in reference to ourselves which are almost as marvelous as those that God has done.

I. First, I am to call your attention to THE MARVELOUS THINGS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT. If you read it carefully, you will notice that first, there are some marvelous things that are marvelous in themselves. Secondly, some that were marvelous in the way in which they were done—“His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.” And then, thirdly, some that were marvelous as to the way in which they were made known—“The Lord has made known His salvation: His righteousness has He openly showed in the sight of the heathen.”

First, then, we will consider the things that are marvelous in themselves. “He has done marvelous things: His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.” You know the story. We were enslaved by sin—we were in such bondage that we were liable to be forever in chains. But our great Champion undertook our cause and entered the lists, pledged to fight for us till the end—and He has done it. It would have been a cause of great joy if I could have come here and said to you, “The Lord Jesus Christ has undertaken to fight our battles for us,” but I have something much better than that to say! He has fought the fight and “His holy arm has gotten Him the victory.” It must have required more faith to believe in the Christ who was to come than to believe in the Christ who has come. It must have required no little faith to believe in Christ as victorious while He was in the midst of the struggle. For instance, when the bloody sweat was falling amidst the olive trees, or when He was hanging upon the Cross and moaning out that awful cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” But the great crisis is past! No longer does the issue of the conflict tremble in the balance— Christ has forever accomplished His warfare and our foes are all beneath His feet—

*“Love’s redeeming work is done—  
Fought the fight, the battle won!”*

What foes has Christ overcome? Our main foe, our sin, both as to the guilt of it and as to the power of it. As to the guilt of it, there was a Law which we had broken and which must be satisfied. Christ has kept the positive precepts of that Law in His own perfect life and He has vindicated the honor of that Law by His sacrificial death upon the Cross. The Law, therefore, being satisfied, the strength of sin is gone and now, O Believers, the sins which you saw in the day of your conviction you shall see no more forever! As Moses triumphantly sang of the enemies of the chosen people, “the depths have covered them,” so can you say of your sins, “There is not one of them left.” Even in God’s great Book of Remembrance there is no record of sin against any Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. “By Him all that believe are justified from all things.” Try to realize this, Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Let the great army of your sins pass before you in review—each one like a son of Anak, armed to the teeth for your destruction. They have gone down into the depths and the Red Sea of Christ’s blood has drowned them! And so He has gained a complete victory over all the guilt of sin! And as for the power of sin within us—alas, we often groan concerning it, but let us groan no longer—or if we do, let us also sing!

The experience of a Christian is summed up in Paul’s utterance, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” [See Sermon #235, Volume

5—THE FAINTING WARRIOR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If you take the whole quotation, I believe you have a summary of a spiritual man’s life—a daily groaning and a daily boasting—a daily humbling and a daily rejoicing—a daily consciousness of sin and a daily consciousness of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to conquer it. We do believe, Beloved, that our sin has received its deathblow. It still lingers within us, for its death is by crucifixion and crucifixion is a lingering death. Its heart is not altogether fastened to the cross, but its hands are, so that we cannot sin as we once did. Its feet, too, are fastened, so that we cannot run in the way of transgressors as we once did—and one of these days the spear shall piece its heart and it shall utterly die. And then, with the faultless ones before the Throne of God, we shall be unattended by depravity or corruption any longer! Therefore let us “sing unto the Lord a new song,” because His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory over sin within us—

*“His is the victor’s name,  
Who fought our fight alone!  
Triumphant saints no honor claim—  
His conquest was His own!”*

In connection with sin came death, for death is the daughter of sin, and follows closely upon sin. Jesus has conquered death. It is not possible for Believers to die eternally, for Jesus said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” And even the character of the natural death is changed to Believers. It is not now a penal infliction, but a necessary way of elevating our nature from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, for, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” Even those who will be living at the coming of the Lord must be “changed” in order that they may be fit to enter Glory. Death, therefore, to Believers, is but a putting off of our weekday garments that we may put on our Sabbath attire—the laying aside of the travel-stained garments of earth that we may put on the pure vestments of joy forever! So we do not now fear death, for Christ has conquered it. He has ripped away the iron bars of the grave and He has left in the sepulcher His own winding-sheets and napkin that there may be suitable furniture in what was once a grim, cold, empty morgue—and He has gone up into His Glory and left Heaven’s gate wide open to all Believers! Unless He shall first come, we, too, shall descend into the grave where He went, but we also shall come up again as He did—and we shall rise complete in the perfection of our redeemed manhood. Then shall we be satisfied, when we awaken in the likeness of our Master. So let us “sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things.”—

*“Hosannah to the Prince of Light,  
Who clothed Himself in clay,  
Entered the iron gates of Death  
And tore the bars away!  
Death is no more the king of dread,  
Since our Immanuel rose  
He took the tyrant’s sting away  
And spoiled our hellish foes.  
See how the Conqueror mounts aloft  
And to His Father flies,  
With scars of honor in His flesh  
And triumph in His eyes.”*

And as Christ has conquered sin and death, so has He conquered the devil and all his hosts of fallen spirits. This monster of iniquity, this monster of craft and malice has striven to hold us in perpetual bondage, but Christ met him in the wilderness and vanquished him there. And met him, as I believe, in the Garden of Gethsemane, in personal conflict, and vanquished him once and for all. And now He has led captivity captive. Inferior spirits were driven away by Christ when He was here upon earth and they fled at the bidding of the King. And now, although Satan still worries and vexes the saints of God, the Lord will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. Therefore, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this is the joyous news we have to bring to sinners—that sin, death and the devil have all been vanquished by the great Captain of our salvation! And for this let us so rejoice that we sing unto the Lord a new song—

*“He Hell in Hell laid low.  
Made sin, He sin overthrew!  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And death, by dying slew!  
Sin, Satan, death appear  
To harass and appall—  
Yet since the gracious Lord is near,  
Backward they go, and fall.”*

But, according to the text, what the Lord did is not only marvelous in itself, but the way in which He did it was also marvelous. Observe that He did it alone—“His own right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.” No one was associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the conquest which He achieved over sin, death and the devil—and nothing is more abhorrent to a believing soul than the idea of giving any particle of Glory to anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. He tread the winepress alone, so let Him alone wear the crown! Sinner, you have not to look for any secondary Savior—Christ has done it all. You need pay no reverence to saints, or martyrs, or priests—Christ has done it all, so resort to Him for all you need. Christ alone has accomplished the salvation of His people—no other hand has been raised to help Him in the fight. Look then to Jesus, only, for salvation! Trust in Him with your whole heart! Throw your weight entirely upon Him, my poor Brother or Sister, if you have not yet done so, and you shall find rest and salvation in Him!

Another marvel is that He did it all so wisely—“His right hand has gotten Him the victory.” You know that we use the word “dexterous” to signify a thing that is done well—we mean that it was done righthandedly. So Christ fought our battle with His right hand. He did it with ease, with strength and with infinite wisdom. Salvation is the very perfection of wisdom because, in the salvation of a sinner, all the attributes of God are equally glorified. There is as much Justice as there is Mercy in the salvation of a sinner by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ— Mercy full-orbed, and Justice full-orbed also—God fulfilling His threats against sin by smiting Christ, and giving to the love of His heart full vent in saving the very chief of sinners through the death of His dear Son. The more I consider the Doctrine of Substitution, the more is my soul enamored of the matchless wisdom of God which devised this system of salvation! As for a hazy atonement which atones for everybody in general and for nobody in particular—an atonement made equally for Judas and for John—I care nothing for it. But a literal, substitutionary Sacrifice— Christ vicariously bearing the wrath of God on my behalf—this calms my conscience with regard to the righteous demands of the Law of God and satisfies the instincts of my nature which declare that, as God is just, He must exact the penalty of my guilt! Dear Brothers and Sisters, Jesus Christ suffering, bleeding, dying, has gotten us the victory! The hand that was pierced by the nails has conquered sin! The hand that was fastened to the wood has fastened up the accusation that was written against us! The hand that bled has brought salvation to us, so that we are Christ’s forever! ‘Twas infinite wisdom which shone in the conquest of sin, and death, and the devil.

But it was also holiness—“His holy arm has gotten Him the victory.” The Psalmist seems, as he advances in his Psalms, to fall more and more in love with the matchless holiness of God—and the holiness of the victory of Christ is a great point in its favor. There is never a sinner so saved as to make God even seem to wink at sin. Since the creation of this world, there was never an act of mercy performed by God that was not in perfect harmony with the most severe justice. God, though He has loved and saved unholy men, has never stained His holy hands in the act of saving them. He still remains the holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, though He is still full of pity and compassion, and passes by transgression, iniquity and sin, and presses prodigal children to His heart. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the answer to the great question, “How can God be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes? How can He be perfectly holy and yet, at the same time, receive into His love and adopt into His family those who are unrighteous and unholy?” O Calvary, you have solved the problem! The bleeding wounds of the Incarnate God have made righteousness and peace to kiss each other. May God grant to you, unconverted Sinner, the Grace to understand how He can save you and yet be perfectly holy—how He can forgive your sins and yet be perfectly just! I know this is the difficulty that troubles you—how can you be received while God is what He is? He can receive you, for the Lord Jesus Christ took the sins of His people and bore them in His own body on the tree and, being the appointed Head of all Believers, He has vindicated in His own Person the inflexible Justice of God! There is the Man who has kept the whole Law of God—not Adam, for he failed to keep it—but the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven! And all whom He represented are now “accepted in the Beloved,” made acceptable to God because of what Jesus Christ has done. So let us magnify that holy arm which has gotten Him the victory!

I have now to speak upon the third point, the marvelous Grace which has revealed all this to us. It is a very familiar thing for us who are sitting here to hear the Gospel, but will you just carry your minds back some two or three thousand years to the period when this Psalm was written? What was then known concerning salvation was known almost exclusively by the Jews. Here and there a proselyte was led into the bonds of the Covenant, but for the most part, the whole world lay in heathen darkness. Where there was the seal of circumcision, there were the oracles of God—but as for the sinners of the Gentiles, they knew nothing whatever concerning the Truth of God. And it might have been so till this day if the Lord had not made known His salvation and openly showed His righteousness in the sight of the heathen. Our present privileges are greater than those of ancient Israel and I am afraid that we sometimes despise, or at least forget those whom we have for a time supplanted. They were the favored people of God and through their unbelief they have been put away for a while, but Israel is yet to be restored to even greater blessings than it formerly enjoyed—

*“The hymn shall yet in Zion swell  
That sounds Messiah’s praise!  
And Your loved name, Immanuel,  
As once in ancient days.  
For Israel yet shall own her King,  
For her salvation waits,  
And hill and dale shall sweetly sing  
With praise in all her gates.”*

Do we value as we ought the privilege we now have of hearing in our own tongue the wonderful works of God? My dear unconverted Hearer, how grateful you ought to be that you were not born in Rome, or Babylon, or in the far-off Indies in those days when there was no Christian missionary to seek you out and care for your soul, but when the whole of the Light of God that shone was shed upon that little land of Palestine! Jesus Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition and now it makes no difference whether we are Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, for the Gospel is to be preached to every creature in all the world— and “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—whatever his previous character may have been, or to whatever race he may have belonged!

Yet let us never forget that in order to accomplish this great work of salvation, it was necessary that the blessed Son of God should descend to this world. And it was also necessary that the Spirit of God should be given to rest upon the Church, to be the Inspiration by which the Gospel should be preached among the heathen. Again let me ask a question. Do we sufficiently reverence the Holy Spirit and love Him as we should for all that He has done? The Incarnation of the Son of God is no greater mystery than the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men. It is truly marvelous that the ever-blessed Spirit, who is equally God with the Father and the Son, should come and reside in these bodies of ours and make them His temple. Yet remember that if it had not been so, there would have been no effective preaching of the Gospel and, this night, unless the Holy Spirit is here to bless the Word, there will be no open showing of Christ’s righteousness to you and no making known of His salvation to your heart. All the victories of Christ, for which I challenge your graceful songs, would be unknown to you if the Holy Spirit did not touch men’s lips so that they might tell what the Lord has done and publish abroad His glorious victories!

Remember, too, that in connection with the work of the Holy Spirit, there has had to be an unbroken chain of Divine Providence to bring the Gospel to you and to your fellow countrymen. Look back through the past ages and see what wonderful revolutions of the wheels full of eyes there have been! Empires have risen and have fallen, but their rise and fall have had a close connection with the preaching of the Gospel. There have been terrific persecutions of the saints of God. Satan has seemed to summon all Hell to attack the Church of Christ, yet he could not destroy its life. Then came the night of Popery, dense as the nights of Egypt’s darkness, but old Rome could not put out the Light of the Gospel! Since then, in what marvelous ways has God led His chosen people! He has raised up His servants, one after another, so that the testimony concerning the victories achieved by Christ might be continued among us and might be spread throughout all the nations of the earth. And thus it comes to pass that, tonight, you have the open Bible in your hands and I am permitted to freely expound the teaching of that Bible to you. How wonderfully has the history of our own country been working towards this happy result! Glorify God and bless His holy name that we live in such halcyon days as these when the Lord has made known His salvation and has openly showed His righteousness in the sight of the heathen!

But yet more sweetly let us praise the Lord that we not only live where the Gospel is made known, but that God has made it known to some of us in a still higher sense. Some of us now understand, as we did not at one time, the righteousness of God—His way of making men righteous through Jesus Christ. We understood it in theory long before God made it savingly known in our soul. This is another work of the Holy Spirit for which we have good reason to sing unto the Lord a new song! Sinner, I have to say to you that God has sent the Gospel to you to tell you that His Son, Jesus Christ, has conquered sin, death and the devil—and that if you believe in Jesus, you shall be a partaker in His victory! There is nothing for you to do but to believe in Him. Even the power to understand His Truth is God’s gift to you. Even the faith that receives it, He works in you according to His Spirit! You are to be nothing that God may be everything! It is for you to fall at His feet, with confusion of face and contrition of heart, and when He bids you do so, to rise up and say, “I will sing unto the Lord a new song. O Lord, I will praise You, for though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me through Him who has gotten the victory on my behalf.”

II. The second point of my subject, on which I must speak very briefly, indeed, is this—THESE ARE SOME MARVELOUS THINGS IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES.

The first of these marvelous things is that after all that Christ has done, and the mercy of God in making it known, so many are utterly careless and indifferent concerning it. Tens of thousands will not even cross the threshold to go and hear about it! Bibles are in many of their houses, yet they do not take the trouble to read them. If they are going on a railway journey, they consult their Bradshaw—but they do not search God’s own Guide Book to find the way to Heaven, or to learn where and when they must start if they mean to reach that place of eternal happiness and bliss! We can still ask, with Isaiah, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” The most marvelous sight out of Hell is an unconverted man! It is a marvel of marvels that the Son of God, Himself, should leave Heaven and all its glories and come to earth to bleed and die in manhood’s shape for manhood’s sake—and yet that there should be anyone in the shape of a man who should not even care to hear the story of His wondrous Sacrifice, or that hearing the story, should disregard it as if it were of no interest to him! Yet see how men rush to buy a newspaper when there is some little bit of news! With what avidity do some young people—and some old people too, who ought to know better—read the foolish story of a love-sick maid! How freely their tears flow over imaginary griefs! Yet the Lord Jesus Christ, bleeding to death in disinterested love to His enemies, moves them not to tears, and their hearts remain untouched by the story of His sufferings as if they were made of marble!

The depravity of mankind is a miracle of sin. It is as great a miracle from one point of view, as the Grace of God is from another. Jesus Christ neglected! Eternal Love slighted! Infinite Mercy disregarded! Yes, and I have to confess, with great shame, that even the preacher of the Gospel is not always affected by it as he ought to be. And not only must I, my Brothers and Sisters, confess this, but so must others, I fear, who preach the Word of God. Why, it ought to make us dance for joy to have to tell you that there is mercy in the heart of God, that there is pardon for sinners, that there is life for the dead, that the great heart of God yearns over sinners! And our hearts ought to be ready to break when we find that men disregard all this good news and are not affected by it. It is an astounding calamity that men should have fallen so terribly that they are insensible to Infinite Love! God grant that His Grace may show to you unconverted sinners what a horrible state your hearts must be in that, after all that Christ has done, you still give Him no token of gratitude, no song of praise for the wonders He has worked!

Looking from this point of view, there is another marvelous thing— that some of us have been brought to recognize the work of Christ so that we are saved by it, because, to confess the truth, there are some of us who were very unlikely subjects (speaking after the manner of men) to be saved. Probably each saved person here thought himself the most unlikely one ever to be saved. I know that I thought so concerning myself. You remember the story of a Scotchman who went to see Mr. Rowland Hill and who sat and looked him in the face for so long that the good old minister asked him, “What are you looking at?” He replied, “I have been studying the lines of your face.” “What do you make of them?” asked Rowland. And the answer was, “I was thinking what a great vagabond you would have been if the Grace of God had not met with you.” “That thought has often struck me,” said Rowland! And a similar thought has often struck some of us. If we had not been converted, wouldn’t we have led others into sin? Wouldn’t we have invented fresh pleasures of vice and folly? Who would have stopped us? We had daring enough for anything—enough even to have bearded the very devil himself if we had thought that some new vice could have been invented, or some fresh pleasure of sin could have been discovered! But now that God has made us yield, “by Sovereign Grace subdued,” and brought us to His feet, and put on us the chains which now we gladly welcome and which we long to wear forever, O come and let us sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things for us! “His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory!” Dear child of God, if there is special Grace in your case, as I know you feel that there has been, there ought to be special honor given to Christ by you. Everyone who is saved ought to live a very special life, an extraordinary life. If you were an extraordinary sinner, or have been, in some way or other, an extraordinary debtor to Divine Love, may there be some extraordinary devotion, extraordinary consecration, extraordinary faith, extraordinary liberality, extraordinary loving kindness, or something else about you in which the traces of that marvelous right hand of God and His holy arm will be plainly manifested!

The last thing I will speak about is this— there is something marvelous in the joy which we, who have believed in the victory worked by Christ, have received. Probably all of you have sung that song of which the refrain is—

*“I am so glad that Jesus loves me.”*  
That refrain is very monotonous, yet I think I should like to sing it all night and should not wish to leave off even when the morning broke—

*“I am so glad that Jesus loves me.”*  
You may turn it over, and over, and over, and over, as long as you like, but you will never find anything that makes you so glad as that thought, “Jesus loves me.” And you will never find that the sweetness of that thought, “Jesus loves me,” will ever be exhausted. Sinner, if you only knew the blessedness of the life of Christ, you would be glad enough to run away from your own life and run to share ours in Him! We have peace like a river, we can leave all our cares and our burdens with our God. We are just where we love most to be—in the bosom of our Heavenly Father—and the Spirit of adoption makes us feel perfectly at home with Him. We can say, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you!” We are in perfect safety, for who is he that can destroy those whom Christ protects? We have got into peace even with our own conscience. We have also a blessed prospect for the future—we shall be borne along upon the wings of Divine Providence until we exchange them for the wings of angels! We have a Heaven below and we are looking for a still better Heaven above—

*“All that remains for me  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come  
To bear me to the King!”*

This is the lower part of the choir. Some of the singers are up in the galleries and we are learning, here, the notes that we shall sing above. Come, Beloved, let us make these sinners long to share our joys! If any of you saints have been moaning and groaning of late, get into your proper condition! Begin to tune up and praise the Lord with all your might till the ungodly shall say, “After all, there is something sweeter and brighter and better in the lives of these Christians than we have ever known in ours.”

But whether you will rejoice or not, my soul does magnify the Lord and my spirit does rejoice in God my Savior! And so I will, by His help, till death suspends these mortal songs, or melts them into the immortal songs before the Throne of God! God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 116.**  
1. I love the LORD because He has heard my voice and my  
supplications. [See Sermon #240, Volume 5—PRAYER ANSWERED, LOVE NOURISHED— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Every

answered prayer should make us love the Lord and especially those prayers that come up from our heart when it is overwhelmed within us. When we pray in deep trouble and God sends us help and deliverance, it is impossible for us not to love Him! Cannot each Believer here say, with great gratitude, “I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications”?

2. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. “This begging business pays so well that I will never give it up as long as I live! The Lord has heard me, so He shall hear me again and again. He is so good and so generous a God—and such bounties are continually being distributed at His door—that I will never go to anybody else, but will continue to knock at God’s door as long as I live.” The Psalmist goes on to tell us what was the special occasion which brought out this expression of his gratitude.

3, 4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul. [See Sermon #1216, Volume

21—TO SOULS IN AGONY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] His petition was short, earnest, plain and personal. It was a sharp arrow shot from the bow of prayer—and it reached its mark in the heart of God. Are any of you just now in very sore distress? Then let each one imitate the example of the Psalmist and pray, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” Have you been delivered as the Psalmist was? Then, make a note of it! Be sure to jot it down in your diary, so that when you get into such a trouble again, you may turn to the record of God’s delivering mercy and say, “The God who delivered me before has not changed, so I will apply to Him again, for I am sure that He will again deliver me.”

5, 6. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple: I was brought low and He helped me. Poor simpletons who cannot help themselves, but who are, nevertheless, free from deceit and craft and take God’s Word as they find it—sincere simple souls—who trust in the Lord! He will take care of them, but He will leave those who think they are wise enough to do so, to take care of themselves.

7, 8. Return unto your rest O my soul; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. If we have enjoyed this trinity of deliverances, let us praise the Three-One God forever and ever! Praise Him, O my Soul, if you are saved! Praise God, O my eyes! Be filled with the happy tears of gratitude since He has delivered you from the bitter, briny tears of grief! Praise Him, O you feet that He has kept from falling and run in the way of His commandments with great joy!

9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. “That shall be my way of walking—not before men, that I may gain their praise, but I will consider the Lord and the Lord alone. And as long as I please Him, I shall not mind whether I please anybody else or not.

10, 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. It is always better not to speak in haste. It is very seldom that we say much that is worth hearing when we talk too fast. “I said in my haste, All men are liars.”

12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? That is better, for it is better to praise the Lord than to find fault with men, even if the fault found is really there. It is better for each one of us to be rendering our homage to God than picking holes in the coats of others, so let each one of us ask, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”

13. I will take—The Psalmist asks, “What shall I render?” And he answers, “I will take.” That is a strange way of rendering, is it not? Yes, Brothers and Sisters, but that is the way for us to show our gratitude to the Lord for all His benefits toward us. John Newton was right when he wrote—

*“The best return for one like me,  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from His gifts to draw a plea,  
And ask Him still for more.”*

“I will take”—

13, 14. The cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. And I can be spokesman for you, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and say that the Lord is good, and that we have proved Him to be good to us under peculiarly trying circumstances. He does not fail to help His people, neither does He turn His back upon them in their hour of need. We have tried all other dependences and have been bitterly disappointed. But the Rock of Israel’s salvation stands fast forever, Glory be to the name of Jehovah of Hosts! Let us pay our vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.

15. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. [See  
Sermon #1036, Volume 18—PRECIOUS DEATHS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It is an event for which He makes all necessary arrangements. He does not allow it to happen “accidentally,” or according to the will of man. As good old John Ryland says—

**“Not a single shaft can hit  
Till the God of Love thinks fit.”**  
16. O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds. [See Sermon #312, Volume 6—  
PERSONAL SERVICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Psalmist said that he was a home-born slave because his mother was a servant of God and he was born, as it were, a servant of his mother’s Lord. How delightful it is to be a Christian and the son of a Christian! Let us rejoice and be glad if that is our happy lot. It is more honor to have had a mother who feared the Lord than a mother who was princess or an empress, but who had not the Grace of God in her heart.

17-19. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the LORD’S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3284 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SEQUEL TO DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY  
NO. 3284

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 4, 1866.

**“The LORD reigns; let the people tremble.”  
Psalm 99:1.  
“The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice.”  
Psalm 97:1.**  
No Doctrine in the whole Word of God has more excited the hatred of mankind than the truth of the absolute Sovereignty of God. [See Sermon #77,  
Volume 2—DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The fact that “the Lord reigns” is indisputable— and it is this fact that arises the utmost opposition in the unrenewed human heart. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” We know what the Lord thinks of their rebellion against Him—“He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure.” Let us, Beloved, not be among those who refuse to believe this great Truth of God, but may we humbly bow before that dread Sovereign who does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world—

*“God is a King of power unknown;  
Firm are the orders of His Throne!  
If He resolves, who dare oppose,  
Or ask Him why, or what He does?”*

God has the right to act thus, first, because He is the source of all created existence. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” and everything else that exists is the product of His creative power! As the writer of the 100thPsalm says, “It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves.” So He has the absolute right to do with us whatever He pleases. It rested with Him to make us or not to make us. And when He determined to create, it was according to His own will that He made one creature a worm and another an eagle, one an ant crawling upon its little hill and another a leviathan making the deep to boil. It was by His decree that there were almost boundless variations among the great family of mankind. In constitution, disposition and temperament—in the very appearance of our bodies, in the strange diversities of our mental capacities, in our position upon the globe or our place and circumstances in any particular country and nation—we see traces of the Sovereign purpose and will of God. It is true that our ancestors, parents and surroundings have exerted certain influences upon us, but there are peculiarities about each one of us which can only be ascribed to the Sovereign good pleasure of God. That one should be a silent and unobtrusive traveler through life’s pilgrimage, and that another should be so eloquent as to speak in words that find an echo the wide world over—that one should sweat and toil all his days, and that another should be dandled upon the knee of luxury—we may say what we will about all this, but whether we agree with it or not, we cannot deny that it is according to Divine appointment and order and, therefore, we must submit to it—

*“The Lord is King; who them shall dare  
Resist His will, distrust His care,  
Or murmur at His wise decrees,  
Or doubt His royal promises?  
The Lord is King, child of the dust,  
The Judge of all the earth is just—  
Holy and true are all His ways,  
Let every creature speak His praise.”*

Not only do we believe that God being the Creator, has the right to make His creatures according to His own will, but we also believe that He has another right over us acquired from our sinful nature. We may say, though we speak it with bated breath in the Presence of His awful Majesty, that even creatures have their rights at their Creator’s hand. For instance, every creature may claim from its Creator that it should not be punished if it does not offend—and that it should be made happy if it is obedient to His commands. Such rights Jehovah has always acknowledged and has never violated. But you and I, dear Friends, have lost all the rights of creatureship, for we have all sinned! A subject of this realm has the right of freedom to go where he pleases and do what he pleases as long as he does not offend against the law of the land. But if he commits high treason, or robbery, or some other crime and so is brought under the condemnation of the law, he immediately loses all right to his freedom and is put in prison with other criminals.

Now the Law of God’s universe, a most equitable and just Law, runs thus, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” And we have all sinned—the sentence of death is recorded against every soul born of woman—and that any of us are still permitted to live is due to the clemency of the great King! Some of us, blessed be His holy name, have been pardoned by Him. And having been pardoned, we shall never again be condemned—but others are put off during their Majesty’s pleasure and that respite is an act of Divine Sovereignty. Had He executed the sentence pronounced upon us as soon as we had sinned, we might have bewailed His severity, yet we could never have impeached His Justice, for we should have deserved the utmost penalty that could have been demanded by His righteous Law! So that, by virtue of our sinnership, God has the right to punish us if He pleases to do so. But if He can consistently, with the principles of Eternal Justice, pardon us, He has the right do so! You noticed that I said, “consistently with the principles of Eternal Justice,” for God will never violate those principles. He can always do as He wills, but He always wills to do what is right and, by the Atonement of His dear Son, He has made a way by which He can satisfy all the claims of His inflexible Justice and yet can take infinite delight in bestowing His mercy upon the guilty! Then surely, as mercy is not only God’s prerogative as King, but also had to be so dearly bought by the precious blood of His wellbeloved Son, we ought not to be backward in confessing that He has the right to bestow that mercy whenever He pleases. At all events, whether we believe it or not, this declaration is still thundered forth from the Throne of the Eternal, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Observe then, three rights which belong to God—as Creator, as Judge, having the right to punish the guilty. And as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, having the right to pardon sinners and to do it without, in the slightest degree, violating His Justice. These are high Doctrines from which some turn away in despair. It is true that they are high, as high as the Throne of God Himself! When I think of them, I feel like the Prophet Ezekiel when he looked upon those wheels that were so high that they were dreadful. Yet, Beloved, as they are true, let us bow before them with awestricken spirits, yet with believing hearts knowing that the Judge of all the earth is certain to do that which is right!

Moreover, the Sovereignty of God is also displayed in His distribution of gifts among His own people—and surely He has the right to do this because the gifts are His own. If we could claim them as ours, they would not be gifts—they would be rightly due to us like anything else that belonged to us. If any man has a valid claim upon God for mercy, then it is not mercy that he should claim, but justice! If any man, by virtue of his own works, deserves to be saved, then salvation is of works and not of Grace—but this the Scriptures distinctly deny! If you come to God expecting to receive from Him spiritual gifts because of certain rights vested in yourselves, you come to Him on a footing that He cannot tolerate for a moment! He will say to you, “May I not do as I will with My own?” And He will give nothing to you who claim it as a right. But He will give all they need to those who come to Him confessing that they have no right to His mercy and entreating that it may be bestowed upon them through the riches of His Grace in Christ Jesus—

“ **Justice upon a dreadful Throne  
Maintains the rights of God  
While mercy sends her pardons down,  
Bought with a Savior’s blood.”**

I have thus reminded you of the Truth of God which is not only stated in our two texts, but is revealed in many other Scriptures—the Truth that “the Lord reigns.” As He reigns in Creation and Providence, so does He reign in the realm of His Grace. Taking the two texts together, I want, earnestly and affectionately, first to address the unsaved sinner. And then to speak to the saved Believer, endeavoring to invoke in each soul the twin emotions of rejoicing and trembling—“The Lord reigns, let the people tremble.” “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice.”

I. So, first, LET ME SPEAK TO THE UNSAVED SINNER.  
Sinner, it is an unspeakable mercy for you that the Lord reigns, for it is because He reigns that you are yet alive. If God were not King, the sentence of Justice must be executed swiftly, surely, mercilessly! And every sinner, the moment that he sinned, must die. But, Sinner, He who is King is very gracious and He says to the officer of Justice, “Spare that man. Let him live.” He has spared some of you thirty, forty, fifty, sixty—it may be even 70 years! You would not have spared any of your fellow creatures who had offended you as long as that. If a man provoked you to your face, your anger would wax hot against him long before 20 years! Some of you would not bear with him even for 20 minutes—yet you have provoked the Lord year after year—but the long-suffering patience in the heart of God has borne with you even until now! He has said concerning you, again and again, “Spare him! Spare her!” When fever shot its hot darts at you, God turned them aside! And when the poison of disease was actually in your blood, He removed it with His healing hand. The Lord who reigns has spared you—therefore rejoice!  
Yet tremble at the same time, Sinner, for this great King can as readily slay as He can spare. One turn of His hand, no, not as much as that—He need not even lift His little finger—He has but to will your death and then where would you be? He who has been so strong to spare can be just as strong to smite! He has not yet taken up the axe, but when once He lifts it and its sharp edge falls upon the tree that is still barren, what will become of it? “The Lord reigns; let the people tremble.” If He were to come to you tonight and lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, it would be all in vain for you to attempt to resist Him! The breath of your nostrils is so absolutely under God’s control that all the physicians in the world could not extend the lease of your life if He were to say to you, “This night shall your soul be required of you.” So tremble at the recollection that “the Lord reigns,” for you are as completely in His power as a moth would be in yours if you held it in your hand knowing that you could crush it any moment that you pleased!  
Another instance of Divine Sovereignty which may cause you both to rejoice and to tremble, is this—God has sent the Gospel to you. Think of this fact, my Hearer! There are millions upon millions of your fellow creatures who have never heard the Gospel and who are going down to their doom in utter ignorance of the great salvation! Their idol gods cannot save them. Their blocks of wood and stone cannot hear their cry of hopeless sorrow. But unto you is the word of this salvation sent! Many in this great London of ours are born and nurtured amid scenes of vice and iniquity—they never enter the House of Prayer and possibly even the voice of the street preacher never reaches their ears. But some of you heard the name of Jesus mingled with the hush of your first lullaby! You were dandled on the knee of piety, and carried even as a baby in the arms of earnest prayer. It is a most gracious Sovereignty that has accorded you such great privileges as these! It is the Lord, the Lord who reigns, to whom you owe all this! Therefore rejoice, yet tremble as well, for these high privileges involve corresponding responsibilities—and He will require of you a strict account of the way in which you have used these advantages which others have not possessed. One of these days He will make inquisition and will say to you, “I gave you light—did you rejoice in it? I sent the Gospel to you—did you listen to the joyful sound, or did you shut your ears to it and turn away from it with contempt and provoke Me to anger against you?” Besides, Sinner, although you are able to hear the Gospel, today, you may not be allowed to hear it tomorrow! Instead of the message to you being as it is today—“Believe and live,” tomorrow it may be—“Depart you cursed.” Instead of the entreaty being addressed to you as it is today, “Turn you, turn you, for why will you die?” Tomorrow the dread sentence may be pronounced by Jehovah the King, “Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would have none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof.” Mercy’s day lasts not forever! God’s Gospel shall not always be trifled with! You may for a time remember to listen to the loving, tender, wooing voice of the Savior, but I would have you remember that He will not always quietly submit to your rejection of His gracious invitations! Tremble, I beseech you, lest the music of the silver trumpet of the Gospel should give place to the harsh clangor of the knell announcing that you have been driven from the Presence of the King to that dread prison where the voice of love and mercy shall never be heard! Thus I bid you rejoice in your present privileges, but also tremble, lest if you do not prize them and use them aright, they may rise up in judgment to condemn you!

There are many in this place who may well thank the King for His Sovereign Mercy to them for they are the subjects of the strivings of His Holy Spirit. There are many here who cannot listen to the Gospel without being, to some extent, impressed by it. They have been seen to shed tears because of their consciousness of sin— and there have been times when it has been exceedingly difficult for them to continue in the service of Satan. Some of you cannot sin with impunity as others can, and it has sometimes been a question with you whether you dare occupy these seats unless you resolve to give up your darling sins! Well, if the Holy Spirit has thus strived with you, thank God, for this is another instance of His Sovereignty! Yet remember how early in the history of mankind God had to say, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” In a moment the Sovereignty of God may take away all those melting and gracious influences! And do you know what would happen to you then? Your conscience would be seared as with a hot iron and your natural hardness of heart would be followed by a judicial hardness which would be still more terrible! You might then continue to hear the Gospel, but it would be as though it were being preached to the dead—you would sit in your pews and experience no more feeling than a row of statues could— and you would live only to walk away and forget that you had been listening to the Truth of God. I tremble as I look around upon some of you! I cannot help fearing that you have already reached this dreadful state and that God has said concerning you, “They are joined to their idols, let them alone.” I see some here who once made a profession of religion and who would even speak in God’s name, but they turned aside! Then they professed to repent, but afterwards turned aside again. And now no message ever seems to startle them. They have listened to the Gospel until they have become Gospel-hardened—that which should have been the means of their salvation has become the means of their damnation! That same Gospel which has been a savor of life unto life to many others, has become a savor of death unto death to them! Take heed, Sinner, for He who melts can harden—and if you have long resisted the strivings of the Spirit, it may be that the Lord will allow you to go on sinning unrebuked—until you have filled up the measure of your iniquity and received the due reward of your evil deeds!  
Let me also remind those of you who are unconverted that you have a further proof of Divine Sovereignty in the fact that God has promised to hear prayer. There are many promises like these, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks, it shall be opened.” God in mercy invites you to come to Him—and this is a subject for heartfelt rejoicing—but it is also a cause of trembling, for the door of His mercy will not always remain open and, “when once the Master of the house is risen up and has shut the door and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us! He shall answer and say unto you, I know not who you are.” Tonight Jesus is lifted up in the preaching of the Gospel as once He was lifted up upon the Cross, and He bids us cry to you, “Look and live! Look and live,” for it is still true that—  
*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee.  
Then look, Sinner, look unto Him and be saved, Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”*  
But if you refuse to obey the Gospel invitation, what must become of you? Surely Captain Execution, with the sharp axe in his hand, will come forth and take you to your well-deserved doom! If God were to deal with you according to your deserts, what hope would there be for you? Yet He bids you repent and He speaks to us as He said to Ezekiel, “Say unto them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?” Isaiah’s message is still true— “Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Sinner, I am happy in standing here as the ambassador of my King—and yet while I rejoice, I tremble lest you should reject the message that He has sent to you in the greatness of His Grace, for my King is not to be trifled with—He deals severely with those who spurn His mercy! Nothing provokes Him more than slights cast upon His dear Son! To turn away from the blood of His atoning Sacrifice will bring down upon you the indignation of the Most High! Oh, venture not upon such a perilous course, but with those trembling lips of yours kiss the Son, trust in Him, depend upon Him and you shall find salvation now to the praise and Glory of God’s good Grace!—  
**“Long the Gospel you have spurned,  
Long delayed to love your God,  
Stifled conscience, nor have turned  
Wooed though by a Savior’s blood!  
Wretched, ruined, helpless soul,  
To a Savior’s blood apply—  
He alone can make you whole,  
Fly to Jesus, Sinner, fly!”**  
II. Thus have I spoken to sinners. Now I am briefly TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.  
You “precious sons on Zion, comparable to fine gold,” look by faith to your King as He sits upon the Throne! And first, rejoice that you are His. It is the King who has saved you! Your pardon is signed by the royal hand—it would be worthless to you if it were not so signed! It is Sovereignty that puts the crown upon every other attribute of God! It is the King who has chosen you, the King who has saved you!  
Yet, Beloved, while I bid you rejoice, I would have you rejoice with trembling while I suggest to you the question—are you sure that the Lord has saved you? I put the question to myself—My Soul, are you sure that the Lord has saved you? Have you made your own calling and election sure before exhorting others to seek the Lord? It is well for all of us to examine themselves and see whether we are in the faith or not. My Brothers on the platform, you who are officers in the Church, I evoke you to make sure work for eternity! You fathers in Israel, presume not upon your gray hairs, but search yourselves, or, better still, let each of us pray David’s prayer, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” You parents who have been for years members of the Church—and you young men and maidens who have not long joined our ranks—rejoice with trembling and each one of you pray, “O Lord, by Your Holy Spirit witnessing with my spirit, assure me that I am born to God!”  
I have been thinking of these two texts in connection with ourselves who are members of this Church. What a notable instance of Sovereignty is exhibited in the usefulness of the members of this Church! Some of us have, in a very distinguished manner, been made the parents of spiritual children and our seed has become very numerous. Here is Sovereignty in which I, for one, do exceedingly rejoice! And there are Brothers and Sisters here who also rejoice in it. But I, for one, must tremble as well as rejoice. What if the Master should take back the power which He has up to now lent us? What if our preaching should become sapless and savorless to God’s people and lifeless and powerless to sinners? O my God, let me die before that should become my unhappy lot! I could never endure to live as some ministers seem content to do. To be a cumberer of the ground, to see no sign of God’s hand being made bare—oh, this would indeed be misery! May the Lord preserve us from ever having that sad experience! I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters, that you all feel that it would be far better for you to die as far as your bodies are concerned than to die in the sense of being no longer spiritually fruitful. Therefore, while we rejoice over the great blessing with which the Lord has so long enriched us, let us tremble lest we give Him cause to withhold it for the future! Unless we put every wreath of laurel upon the King’s own head, He will speedily withdraw any power with which He entrusted us—and we shall be as weak as Samson was when the Spirit of God had departed from him.  
What a remarkable instance of Divine Sovereignty we have in this Church, itself, as well as in individual members of it! We were among the least in Zion, but the Lord has multiplied us greatly. Why is this? Why has He blessed us so wondrously and passed by others who scarcely ever hear the cry of a newborn convert? What other reason can we give than this—because it seemed good in His sight? Therefore let us rejoice, but let us also rejoice with trembling lest the Lord should take away from us such blessed experiences! Well do I recollect the words of that man of God who is now in Heaven—dear Mr. Jonathan George—at the opening of this building. Quoting Jeremiah 33:9, “They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.” He said that the more blessing and prosperity the Lord gave us, the more humble must we be—and the more anxious not to provoke Him to jealousy—or else He would take away His Presence from us. I trust that many of you, Beloved, cherish this holy anxiety lest we should grieve the Spirit and drive Him away from us. At all events, I know one who, without being unbelieving, is always very anxious that “Ichabod” (“the Glory is departed”) should never be written on these walls. What if the Lord should allow your zeal to grow cold, your doctrines to become unsound and your lives unholy? What if, instead of ardor there should be lethargy? Instead of love there should be bickering? Instead of harmony there should be division and instead of mighty wrestling with the Most High there should be sad contentions with one another? May these eyes be sealed in death before such a wretched state of things as that should come! And I know that many of you are saying, “Amen,” as far as you, also, are concerned! Yet all this is possible, for the King who gives can take away, and He who now blesses can withhold the blessing! And He will do it unless as a Church, we are faithful and true to Him. Go you now to the cities of Asia Minor where once the seven golden candlesticks brought such Glory to God, and how much light will you find there? Where is Pergamos? Where is Laodicea? Where are the Churches of Philadelphia and the rest? Have not the most of them ceased to be because they left their first love and turned back unto the world? If we have any Achans in the camp, we would not stone them, but we would pray for them—and we would plead with them to repent and turn again unto the Lord—lest the whole Church should suffer through them as Israel did through the sin of Achan.

This solemn Truth of the Sovereignty of God rests very heavily on my heart. Let it rest very heavily on yours, also, so that together we may rejoice because of all the goodness that the Lord has bestowed upon us and, at the same time, let us tremble lest we should in any way provoke Him to anger and cause Him to withdraw His Presence from us, and say to us, “I will work no more through you, but I will leave you to your own devices that you may find out what you can do when I have gone away from you.” God forbid that this should ever happen to us!  
Now as we come to the Table of our Lord, let us come with deep solemnity remembering that there is Sovereignty here, also. The observance of this ordinance may be very dull and dreary to you—or God make it a time of most blessed fellowship with Him and with one another. The means of Grace are not always equally profitable to us. The pipes are always golden, but the holy oil does not always flow in our direction. There is blessing to be had at all times, but you cannot always get it. Ask the King to give you Divine Grace to recognize His right to give or to withhold the blessing—and then plead with Him, for Jesus’ sake, to remember you for good! God grant that it may be so, for His dear name’s sake! Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 72**  
A Psalm for Solomon.

This was David’s dying bequest to his son, Solomon—but a greater than Solomon is here, for this Psalm concerns the reign, triumph and everlasting dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Verses 1, 2 Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with judgment. It is the distinguishing mark of Christ’s Kingdom that He cares so much for the poor—whereas in other kingdoms they are generally pushed to the wall—and men of great estate and consequence get all the good positions. In Christ’s Kingdom the poor are exalted!

3. The mountains shall bring peace to Your people and the little hills, by righteousness. Those mountains, in whose caves robbers lurked, and from whose heights enemies often came down and swept away the little estates of the lowlanders—even these shall bring peace and comfort—

*“No strife shall vex Messiah’s reign!”*  
When Jesus Christ comes a second time to this earth, we shall see these prophecies literally fulfilled—but until then we delight to know that the reign of Christ is a reign of peace!

4-6. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. After being mown, the grass is tender—should there be a long period of burning sunshine—the roots left exposed might soon be dried up and the lower portion of the stem, bereft of moisture, might become hard. Never does rain seem so refreshing to the grass as just after the mowing! So is it in Christ’s Kingdom. Upon you whose broken hearts are like mown grass. Upon you who have been cut down by the sharp scythe of affliction and who have seen your hopes withered before your eyes— Jesus shall come on gently like rain upon the mown grass. And as the showers fertilize the barren earth, so shall the Presence of Christ make your hearts to be fertile and fruitful. If any of us are like the parched earth or the mown grass, may we have this gracious promise fulfilled to us!

7. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures. Under other kings sinners have flourished and great oppressors have walked in public. But in Christ’s days, the righteous shall flourish, “and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures.” There have been some times of truce. There have been some periods when the temple of Janus has been shut. But when Christ comes, the Lord shall break the bow and cut the spear in sunder—not lay them by in store for days of warfare in the future—but break them up as there will be no further use for them!

8, 9. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust. The Arabs, the wandering Bedouin tribes, unconquered and untamable, “shall bow before Him.” And His enemies shall not merely be beaten once or twice, but they “shall lick the dust”—they shall be so entirely broken that there shall be no fear of their rebelling in the future!

10. The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents. Britain and some of her sister islands shall do homage to this great Solomon.  
10. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God. And men of swarthy skin shall acknowledge the King of the Jews as Lord over all!  
11. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. There is a great future for you, Christians, a glorious future for our holy religion! The handful by the side of the lake shall yet become an allconquering host! As it was when that cake of barley bread fell into the midst of the camp of Midian and overthrew the tent, so that it lay along, and as it was when the shout was heard, “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon,” so shall it be with us before long. God’s people having no strength of their own shall, nevertheless, break the power of their enemy when the war-cry shall be heard, “The sword of Christ and of the Lord of Hosts!”  
12, 13. For He shall deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him that has no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save

the souls of the needy. [See Sermon #1037, Volume 18—THE POOR MAN’S FRIEND— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Now, needy

one, here is a promise for you! Is there one here that has no helper? Then let that one know that Christ is the Friend of the friendless and the Helper of the helpless!

14-16. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised. There shall be an handful of corn on the

earth—[See Sermon #717, Volume 12—PRAY FOR JESUS—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Only a handful? O you birds of the air, how you long to eat it all up! O you thorns, how soon would you choke it to death! It is only a handful of corn—

16. Upon the top of the mountains. That is a bad place for corn—surely it will die there—the winter snows will chill it and, exposed to every stormy blast it will never fill the arms of the reaper. But is it so? Listen—

16. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. Just as there are peculiar noises heard in a great forest when the wind sweeps through it— there is an allusion to this in the Hebrew—there should be such an abundance of fruit from this handful of corn that as when the forest bows its head before the whirlwind, so shall there be heard a sound as of God rushing among the multitude of His saints!

16. And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. They shall be so many that one might as well attempt to count the blades of grass as to reckon the number of God’s saints!

17-20. His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen, and Amen. The prayers of Da

vid, the son of Jesse are ended. [See Sermons #27, Volume 1—THE ETERNAL NAME; #2187, Volume 37—JESUS—“ALL BLESSING AND ALL BLESSED”; #2451, Volume 42—“BLESSED IN HIM” and #129, Volume 3—DAVID’S DYING PRAYER—Read/download all these sermons, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He had nothing more to pray for! He had his heart’s highest and best wish and, therefore, he closes his prayer where God had given him all that he could ask.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Sermon #769 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

NO. 769

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 8, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Serve the Lord with gladness.”  
Psalm 100:2.**

MUCH of the sweetness of music lies in the ear to which it is addressed. There are mysterious sweetnesses and unknown harmonies which lurk, and the notes are detected only by the ear attuned to melody. The most enchanting strain to one ear may be discord, itself, to another! The wise man tells us that as vinegar is upon niter, so is he that sings songs to a sad heart. The song in itself may embody the soul of delight and yet it may be misery itself to the ear which is not in tune with it. So is it with my text. It is a short, but inexpressibly sweet stanza. “Serve the Lord with gladness,” is a delightful sonnet to the spiritual mind, but to the ungodly, the careless, the unspiritual, it is flat and dull—the grinding of labor’s wheel—and far other than a verse from a cherub’s harp.

The very first word is “serve.” And the proud spirit of unregenerate man kicks at that at once. “Serve!” says the man, “why should I be a servant? I hate the yoke and I will not bow my neck.” The lawless spirit, fond of what it calls “free thought” and “free action,” hates the sound of the word “serve.” “I will be my own master,” says the willful, wayward soul of the man who knows not what is meant by obedience and has never drunk into the deep joy of submission to the Lord. “Serve?” he says, “let those do so who are calves enough to bow their necks, but as for me, I know no government but my own ungovernable will.”

But to the soul that has been subdued, delivered from the bondage of its own self-dominion—the soul that is humble, teachable, weaned from the world, and changed into a little child—the thought of service has Heaven in it! For such a heart remembers that in the New Jerusalem they serve God day and night, and it looks forward to perfect service as being its perfect rest. Renewed minds accept “Ich dien”—“I serve,” as their motto and feel ennobled by it. The next word of our text, which we may well call the golden canticle of labor, is even more distasteful to the carnal mind. “Serve the Lord.”

Men’s hearts are naturally atheists—they will not endure the thought of God. The most of men are careless and indifferent to their heavenly King. They remember all things else except the God who made them. We find them willing to serve their country, to serve science, literature, art, trade—but as for serving God they will have none of it! The spirit of this age is too much that of Pharaoh. “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” To the philosophical mind it seems to involve an absurdity to serve a Being whom you cannot see, whose voice you cannot hear, and whose existence is unfelt by the unspiritual, unawakened mind!

Therefore the wise man turns upon his heels and says that he will serve any other master sooner than serve the Lord. The man who has once known—who has tasted that the Lord is gracious and been made to enter into the Lord’s Covenant of Mercy and has seen under what obligations he is laid to the loving kindness and tender mercy of Jehovah—to such a man the very thought of serving God is liberty! He delights to run in the way of God’s commandments, and the statutes of the Most High are to him sweeter than honey, or the dropping of the honeycomb. “Serve the Lord.” “Ah,” says the quickened spirit that has been made obedient by a work of Divine Grace within, “would God I could always serve Him, and never in thought, or word, or deed rebel against His gracious will.” To serve God is to reign! He who obeys the King of kings is himself a king!

As for the next word of my text, which contains the rarest sweetness of it, “Serve the Lord with gladness,” this is a point to which the mere carnal mind never did attain and never will! Any connection between religion and gladness seems to the most of men to be very remote, indeed. Many people attend to their “religion,” as they call it, but it is downright slavery. They go up to their place of worship because it is a terrible necessity of custom that respectable people should meet in certain fixed places each Sunday. But they are glad when the service is short—exceedingly glad if it could be made so short as to be omitted altogether!

They look upon their religious exercises as a tax which they pay to God, or rather, as a tax which they pay to respectability—for we live in a country where many many think it right to profess the Christian faith. The worldly religionists’ service has no gladness in it. “Serve the Lord with gladness” seems, to the carnal mind, to be a perfect monstrosity! And yet, mark you, this is the test between the genuine and the hypocritical professor—by this one thing shall you know who it is that fears God—and who it is that does but offer Him the empty tribute of his lips.

There is an old legend that when the Queen of Sheba came to see Solomon she posed him with many difficulties, and, among the rest, placed before him a vase of artificial flowers which were so skillfully made that for awhile Solomon could not tell which of the two bouquets of flowers were the handiwork of man until he bade them open the window wide and watched to see to which the bees would fly. No bees or flies would lodge upon the artificial, but only upon the genuine ones, for there alone they discerned the mystic sweetness which dwells in the secret aroma of the living bloom.

Even so, observe the worldling’s religion—it is beautifully constructed, well put together, it is everything to the eye that could be expected—but no winged delights ever alight on it, no joyous thoughts find honey there! As for the true Believer in Jesus, he serves his God because he loves to serve Him! He assembles with the great congregation because it is his delight to worship the Most High. To him it is the greatest of all earthly joys and a foretaste of joys celestial to serve the Lord with hands, and heart, and strength—and to spend and be spent for His glory. May God’s Grace bring us to know that the text does not mock us, but that it is a thing which is practicable to every Believer—that we can serve God with gladness, yes, emphatically with gladness—with an overflowing pleasure unknown elsewhere.

I ask you, before we go further, to let this be a point of judgment with every hearer as to whether his soul finds joy in his religion or not. Let each man enquire whether that which he professes to possess ever causes him delight. With all our cares and sorrows, we who have believed have learned to rejoice in the name of our God! But the base-born professor dreads the majesty of Heaven, and feels no flames of childlike love within his bosom. Like slaves, they fear the whip and they know not the force of constraining love which rules within the hearts of adopted and Heavenborn sons of God.

In our text, gladsome service is commended and commanded. We shall first notice its secret springs. Then we will endeavor to track its manifest streams. Then a word or two about its difficulties and some other suggestions about its excellence. And then the conclusion. Briefly on each point.

I. The gladsome service of God has ITS SECRET SPRINGS. These are too many for me to mention them all, but the following may serve as a sample. One main cause why the Believer serves God with gladness is that he is free from the bondage of the Law. When the Believer serves the Lord it is with no idea whatever of obtaining eternal life thereby. He does not go up to public worship—he does not respect the commandments of the Lord’s House because he thinks that thereby he shall escape from Hell or obtain Heaven.

Far from this! He knows that he is saved! He understands that through faith in the Lord Jesus he has been delivered once and for all from the penalty of all his sins—they are all forgiven—he is not afraid of the consequences of them. They are blotted out forever. As for Heaven, he knows that eternal life is his portion as the gift of Sovereign Grace—he is secure of that. He is one with Jesus—nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord, and full well he knows that where Christ is, there shall Christ’s servants be—reigning with Him forever! Therefore the heir of Heaven serves his Lord simply out of gratitude.

He has no salvation to gain, no Heaven to lose—all things are his by a Covenant “ordered in all things and sure.” And now, out of love to the God who chose him and who gave so great a price for his redemption, he desires to lay out himself entirely to his Master’s service. O you who are seeking salvation by the works of the Law, what a miserable life yours must be! Why, you are haunted with the miserable foreboding that unless you do this and that you will forfeit the good will of God and perish! And you hope that if you diligently persevere in obedience, you may perhaps obtain eternal life, though, alas, none of you dare to pretend that you have attained it!

You toil and toil and toil, but you never get that which you toil after, and you never will, for, “by the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified.” However holy or obedient you may be, good works are not the way of salvation. And, as you cannot get to London except by taking the road to London, although you may walk ever so earnestly in the wrong direction, so though you are ever so good and honest and excellent, you never shall attain Heaven by these things, for this is not the door of life. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

And since you who go about to lay another foundation set yourselves in opposition to God, you may build, but your building shall fall to the ground. You may weave, but your garments shall turn to cobwebs. You may toil and labor as in the fire, but you shall never obtain comfort by your own doings. O miserable slaves! Your life is spent in bondage—you shall never be fit to die—and now you know not what it is to live, for living, you dread to die, and dying, you tremble to meet your Judge. Nothing can cover a naked soul but the righteousness of our Lord Jesus!

You may go to church or the Meeting House. You may say prayers and read your Bibles, and do what you will besides, but bond slaves you are and you shall not be heirs of the promise—for what says the Scripture, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.” The child of God works not for life, but from life—he does not work to be saved, he works because he is saved. More zealously than the most earnest person who trusts in works will the Believer serve, and so he will prove that no power in all the world is more mighty than the force of love.

Not selfishly nor because of fear, but gratefully, joyfully, heartily, out of true affection, the true servant of the Lord waits at his Master’s doors! Do you not see, then, how we can serve the Lord with gladness? Because, when we make mistakes in serving God we know they will not destroy us! Because, notwithstanding the thousand infirmities and imperfections of our service, we know that Jesus washes all away in His precious blood. When we sit down sometimes after a day’s seeking to honor God and deplore that we have so greatly failed in it, we do not despair, for we know that the righteousness which covers us has not to be spun by these fingers!

We rejoice that we are accepted not in ourselves, but in the Beloved, and so we rise again and go once more to “serve the Lord with gladness,” because we are still His beloved, still dear to Him, notwithstanding 10,000 slips, and flaws, and errors, and mistakes—still in His Covenant—still saved. Another reason why the Christian serves God with gladness is because he has a lively sense of the contrast between his present service and his former slavery. What a hard, cruel, Egyptian bondage was that out of which Jesus brought us! We thought it liberty, but when our eyes were opened we found it to be captivity itself, for we found that the wages of sin is death.

When sin became exceedingly sinful in our esteem, then we felt the iron enter into our soul, and longed to break the chain. To serve the devil, even when he gives us most of the sweets of sin, is intolerable bondage to a sensible, awakened sinner. But to serve Christ, how pleasant, how joyful! Do but look into the face of the black prince and you will see reason enough to abhor him! But gaze into the eyes of Immanuel, the Prince of princes, the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, and you will feel that if His service involved lying in a jail, or burning at the stake, yet in comparison with the miseries of the bondage of sin, His “ways are ways of pleasantness.” Jesus is the Master and Lord whom to obey is perfect peace. But Satan, the foul tyrant, is one from whom we rejoice to have been delivered.

Moreover, the Believer’s joy in the Lord’s service springs from the fact that he serves God from the instincts of his new nature. Every nature has its instinct. If the Maker creates a bird, it is not painful to that bird to fly, and no force is needed to make it take wing—its instinct is to do so. For a fish to swim is no troublesome matter. That element which might be very distasteful to the bird, is natural enough and pleasing enough to the fish. Now, when God creates in His people a spiritual nature, He puts into them impulsive, energetic instincts which push them forward or restrain them as the case may be.

Take the case of the Well-Beloved, who is the pattern of all the family. When He was but a Child, He was found in the temple hearing and asking questions of the rabbis. And when His father and mother asked Him how it was that He had left them, He said, “Do you not that I must be about My Father’s business? Did you not know that there was a necessity laid upon Me—an uncontrollable impulse within Me which drove Me forward to accomplish the will of Him that sent Me?” So, when you see an earnest Christian working for God and you enquire why he is earnest, he may well reply, “Do you not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

The genuine Christian, full of the love of God, cannot be an idler. “Woe is unto me,” says the Apostle, “if I preach not the Gospel.” To tell to others the love of God becomes to the faithful heart no arduous service. Like Elihu, he can say, “ I speak that I may be refreshed.” I know that some Christians do not find it so—it is because the love of God in them has come to a low ebb, and the life of God is but feebly within. But the vigorous healthy Christian must serve the Lord, yes, and serve Him with gladness, too, because he is then obeying the instincts of his nature and God has made our instincts, when we follow them, to be pleasurable.

The instincts of the new nature, when we follow them, lead us into service, and consequently there comes into our soul a pleasure unknown to those who are not partakers of the regenerate nature. I have said that to the Christian it is a delight to serve God, and so it is, because it exercises in him those powers which yield delight. There is always a delight in benevolence. Now, to tell our fellow sinners the way of salvation is the exercise of the benevolence of our heart and there must be pleasure in it. To serve God causes the exercise of faith, and to exercise faith is one of the grandest pleasures to which a mortal can attain.

Therefore to serve God with faith and confidence must be delightful! Believing service is not the performance of a work naturally irksome to us, to which we bring ourselves by effort. Christian service is the doing of sacred duties which to our new nature are congenial occupations—things in which we take our delights. Those grand old builders who erected the famous cathedrals of the olden times, and laid out so much time and skill in carving the ornaments and piling the pinnacles—shall we pity them for having worked so hard? Far from it! No pity did they require. Pity would be wasted on them. It was their life’s work. They were in their element when they were producing this thing of beauty, or that specimen of wondrous art. And so with the Christian. The service of God is not to him an employment from which he would escape even if he could. No, he feels it to be an intense delight and only wishes that he could be more perfectly taken up with it.

Another reason why the Christian is conscious of great gladness in serving God is that he has a sense of honor with it. Did you ever reflect how wondrous a condescension it is in God to allow a creature to serve Him? “The cattle on a thousand hills are Mine,” He says. “If I were hungry, I would not tell you.” He sits on His Throne and establishes it by His own power. He has no dependence upon His creatures. The greatest of spirits He has ever made are as nothing before Him, and yet, look, He condescends to be served by us! Can I give something to my Creator? Can I do a service to my Redeemer? May I lay my humble tribute at His feet to whom all things belong?

Ah, then, how I am honored! It is an honor to receive from God, but a greater honor still to be a donor to God. Man is put in a very high place when God condescends to make him a co-worker with Himself in the economy of Divine Grace, and accepts from His creature the homage of his body and his soul. Now it is well known that every man will do work which he feels to be an honor much more easily than that which he thinks degrades him. There have been thousands of enterprises undertaken by men when they have been put upon martial honor which they never would have undertaken for mere fee or reward. Men have gone to the cannon’s mouth for the sake of glory. And shall the Christian be altogether insensible to the motive of honor? Shall he not feel it to be his greatest glory to serve his God? And will there not be from this a stream of joy flowing over all our holy work?

Furthermore, the Believer, when he serves God, knows that his service is not the highest place which he occupies. “I am a servant,” he says, “I am not ashamed of it—to serve God is royal dignity, but then I am not altogether and alone a servant.” Here is the Christian’s joy—he hears his Master say, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” Then he recollects that beyond being a friend he is a child. The spirit of adoption within him cries, Abba, Father. He looks upon the Lord Jesus Christ as his elder Brother.

Yes, and beyond that, he hears from the sacred Book that he is married unto Christ. Jesus has become his bridegroom, and he is the beloved spouse! He understands that there is a union near and dear, vital and matchless between him and his Master, so that Jesus is the Head, and he is a member of the same body. Do you see how the thought that the Believer is more than a servant enables him to do more than a servant could do, and gives him a gladness in his service which the mere servant cannot understand?

Again, there comes over the Christian’s mind a gentle thought which in his darkest moments yields him joy, namely, that Grace has promised a reward. We are not to be rewarded for the merit of our works, but still the Free Grace of God has promised that we shall not toil for nothing. The diligent Christian looks for the time when he shall hear it said, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter you into the joy of your Lord.” He is “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

It may be that for the present he toils on and no one gives him a good word—he sows the thankless flood and no harvest springs from the bread cast upon the waters. But he can afford to wait—he has not measured things by the narrow inch of time, but he has taken a broad eternity into his consideration and he knows that the time shall come when those that diligently serve on earth, by faith in Jesus Christ, shall participate in the glories of the coming King and the bliss of the eternal inheritance!

So the humble, trustful worker sets to his seal that God is true, and goes on in his service, waiting upon his gracious Master—not with despondency and timorous fear, but serving the Lord with gladness evermore. I think I have thus shown you as well as I could, this morning, the secret springs which sustain the Christian’s gladness when he is engaged in service.

II. Secondly, let us trace some of the MANIFEST STREAMS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE IN THEIR GLADNESS. Beloved, in the first place we should always serve the Lord with gladness in the public assemblies of His people. The more hypocritical people are, the more solemnly miserable their outward aspect when at worship. As a general rule I believe that those places of worship where it is thought to be wicked to ever have smiling faces are dens of formalism where there is no life of God at all. I know this—if you go through Continental Churches, perhaps two out of three of the preachers are downright deists, or infidels of some class or other—and you will find the most horribly sanctimonious faces, and tones, and manners among clergymen—especially among the worst of them.

Not believing a word they say, they are obliged to pull as long a face as possible to look as if they were in earnest, though they are not. I like to see you coming up to this place not as if you were going to a jail, but like children coming from school and going home to their Father’s house! Last Sunday week I was awakened at six o’clock, in the Hartz mountains, by the cheerful notes of a trumpet playing a sweet enlivening German air. It struck me that was a right fitting way to begin Sunday—to wake up with music—to leave off sleep with a dream of angels singing the songs of Heaven, and to begin the day by uniting in their praise!

Let each Sunday always begin so—not with the dull solemn note of the trombone, but with psaltery and harp with joyful sound. Alas, with many the cry is—“Here’s another dull day in which the Crystal Palace is shut up, and all amusement denied us!” An English Sunday is called by many a dull and dreary day! Ah, you miserable heathens! Well may you speak so! It must be dreary to

 you—but to the genuine Christian—the thought that the world’s burden is laid aside, and that now he is to commune with Heaven is as the sweet sound of the trumpet waking him to a day of feasting and delight!

Then when we come up to the House of God what is there to make us sad? Is there not everything to make us happy? Shall we sing the praises of God dolorously, and imitate the worshippers of Moloch who serve him with shrieks and groans? No! The God we adore is to be praised with happy hearts, smiling faces, and joyful notes. And when we pray to Him shall we be sorrowful? To pray to our Father—a child to spread his needs before his father—can that be bondage? No, blessed be His name, if there is a sweet place on earth, it is the Mercy Seat where earth communes with Heaven!

And when we listen to the reading of the Word of God, or the preaching of His Truths, shall that be a weariness? Yes, when we have no part or lot in it! When it is like reading a will in which we have no legacy! But if the Gospel is preached as our Gospel, the Gospel of our salvation, and we have a share in it—what can so inspire our soul with joy? Yes, let the bells of your heart ring merry peals on Sunday! O you chosen seed, be glad, and of all the days in the week, look at the first as the prime glory of all the feast days of the soul! Do not pull the blinds down! Let the sun shine into the room more cheerily than on weekdays. Your God is happy and would have you happy! And if all the other six days you have to bear your burdens, yet, at least, cast them aside on this Resurrection Day when you must not slumber in the grave of sorrow!

Well, but by serving God we do not mean merely when we come to a place of worship. For to us, in one sense, there are no places of worship. All places are places of worship to a Christian! Wherever he is he ought to be in a worshipping frame of mind. Brethren, when we serve God at the family altar, let us try as parents to mix gladness with it. It is a great mistake when the Christian parent makes the reading and prayer in the family a dull monotonous work. Let us be cheerful and happy at family worship. In your private devotions you should also “Serve the Lord with gladness.” When you get half an hour or more with the Most High, ask Him to enable you to carry out that command of this 100th Psalm—“Serve the Lord with gladness.”

But then the Christian’s service for God lasts all the day long! The genuine Christian knows that he can serve God as much in the shop as he can in the Meeting House. He knows that the service of God can be carried on in the farmyard and market—while he is buying and selling— quite as well as in singing and praying. Should not we do our business much better if we looked upon it in that light? Would it not be a happy thing if, regarding all our work as serving God, we went about it with gladness? Perhaps your work is very hard. Well, be not an eye-servant, or a man-pleaser, but with singleness of heart serve God in that work and you will perform it with gladness.

Perhaps your situation is one in which your toil is very arduous. Consider that God has put you there. If you cannot see a door of removal, accept what God has given, and accepting it from a Father’s hand you will be able to serve Him with gladness. That is a real religion which goes with us through all the acts of daily life! That is a sham religion which only shows itself when a man is on his knees. A few days ago, in the mountains, we went down in a valley to see a wonderful waterfall, a marvelous sheet of water precipitating itself from lofty rocks. And there sat our German friends by scores contemplating it and reverently admiring its sublimities.

As I looked at the cascade, the thought struck me it was rather too orderly to be altogether what it professed to be. And looking on, I noticed that the floods which poured down from the rocks had suddenly diminished, as if the supply of the liquid element was exhausted. Truly so, we found that this wonderful waterfall was played three or four hours a day, and was an artificial wonder! I walked away feeling wonderfully taken in, coming to see a cascade of a kind that was played three hours a day!

And there is plenty of religion of that sort! It is not genuine—it is played three hours a day, or so many hours a week. At certain set times, if you catch the man right, he will be very gracious and godly. But if you stumble in when he is immersed in all the cares of the world you find he is all a sham. O Beloved, let our religion show itself throughout the whole of life! Let us go about our business with a holy gladness because we are serving the Lord! Let us be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord and putting gladness into the whole thing! Above all, let gladness sparkle in all those actions which we feel called upon to perform for our Master’s service.

Dear Sunday school teachers, make the Sunday happy, and your children happy by serving the Lord with gladness! City missionaries and Bible women, do not go round your districts as though you were undertakers’ men, but go there with gladness, serving the Lord! Preacher, throw your soul into your work! Do whatever you undertake to do for the Master with a soul flashing with fire! Look upon it not as bondage, but joy, and serve the Lord in it with a sacred alacrity and delight! Thus I have tried to show some of the manifest streams of the Christian’s delight.

III. But, now, somebody says, “It is much easier to say this than to practice it, and though it may be very easy, indeed, to tell us to serve the Lord with gladness, does the preacher himself always find it easy to do so?” Well, this is not the place for him to make confessions, but he is quite prepared to admit that it is not always easy to serve God with gladness—if it were, we should not need to be told to do it!

But on account of THE DIFFICULTY OF IT, we are, therefore, more often bid to be happy. “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again,” says the Apostle, “I say, Rejoice.” If he had felt it would be easy, it was sufficient to tell us once, but the repetition shows the difficulty. Our inbred sin—is not that enough, when we serve God, to make us do it with the bitter cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?” Yes, but we shall be delivered! I thank God, through Christ our Lord we shall be delivered from the bondage of our corruption!

Let us not think so much about the disease as about the remedy while we sigh over infirmities! Let us bless God that there is a way of glorying in infirmities because the power of Christ will be manifested there. Let us serve God in infirmities with the glad thought that we shall not always be imperfect, but by-and-by shall be in the glory of our Master, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing! Outward trials, again—how hard it is to serve God with gladness when one is losing an estate, or when the cupboard is bare—or when there is scarcely money to provide the children with clothes! Yet the Christian does not live upon what he sees alone—he knows there is a secret strength, a secret Helper—and he knows how to go to God in times of outward trouble and cast his care upon Him who cares for him.

Have you ever read, “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose?” Does not that lantern show a light over your dark path? Beloved, may the Holy Spirit enable you to go on serving God with gladness even though the fig tree should not blossom, and though there should be no herd in the stall. “Yes, but,” says another, “It is difficult to serve God with gladness when placed in the midst of the ungodly.”

So the best of men have found. They have hung their harps upon the willows sometimes. How could they sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? If you cannot sing His song, yet, let me tell you, go on in His work. If you cannot touch the harp strings, yet still serve Him and by-and-by the Lord who gives you Grace to serve, will give you Divine Grace to sing! Though you are not a stranger, yet you are a stranger with your God—He is with you, and you are a sojourner with Him! Though in the midst of the ungodly you walk as in a furnace—yet when the three holy children were in the fire there was a Fourth with them—and so there is One with you like unto the Son of God!

Brethren, we are not to take up those duties which we think to be easy and to leave those we think to be difficult. The more difficult the command of God may seem to be, the more earnestly must we set ourselves to carry it out by Divine aid. The text, “Serve the Lord with gladness,” may seem to be very difficult to those of a gloomy temperament, or depressed spirit, or those who are under trying circumstances, but, O Beloved, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us! What sense says is impossible, faith accomplishes! Therefore let us lift up our hearts and say, “Heavenly Father, help us to serve You with gladness according to Your command.

IV. In the last place, there is much EXCELLENCE in cheerful service. Is it possible that when we serve God with gladness, we thereby escape many fatherly chastisements which otherwise might come upon us? I was reading, reading with some degree of fear, in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, at the 47th verse, these words, “Because you served not the Lord your God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things; therefore shall you serve your enemies which the Lord shall send against you, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in need of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon your neck.”

I was wondering whether if we receive God’s mercies and do not serve Him joyfully, it may not be more than probable that He will withdraw His hand of mercy for awhile, and make us smart under the hand of chastisement till we humble ourselves before Him. Let us serve God with gladness while we have health and strength—we may soon be on the sick bed. Let us be glad to have anything to give to His cause—we may be reduced to poverty and have no place where to lay our heads. While we have the power to serve God let us do it with gladness, being thankful that we are enabled to do it, or else it may be, seeing we prove unworthy of those things, He may make the sky to be covered with clouds and send us dark days and bitter seasons.

Do you not think, too, that when Christians serve God with gladness, they derive many benefits themselves? Does not the Lord water those who water others? Is it not the way with Him, when He sees us diligent in service, to give us greater comforts? We are not under the economy of Law, as I have said before, but still we are under the paternal economy of God’s House. Just as we do with our own children, if we see them obedient, we are apt to give them much more than we should do if they were constantly seeking to have their own way and their own will. No father uses the rod from choice—he only uses it if driven to it.

So is it with us. If we, as dear children, bring forth much fruit unto God, we shall have much boldness in prayer and much communion with God—and a thousand blessings which otherwise we might not receive shall be ours! Besides, Beloved, does not our God deserve to be served with gladness? Oh, when we get to Heaven if we could have regrets, would not this be one—that we had not served Him better? When we served the world, some of us, we used to do it very heartily. When some of you were in the devil’s service, what bold soldiers you were! Nothing was too hot or too heavy in his cause.

And shall we serve Christ with less zeal than men serve the great enemy of souls? Our Master deserves to have the best love, the warmest confidence, the most stern perseverance, the utmost self-denial—let us seek to give Him these and to give them with a cheerful heart! Besides, if we would do good to our fellow men, we must serve God with gladness. I believe thousands of young people are kept from considering the Gospel by the gloom of some professors. I know that the world constantly makes this its excuse for not being religious—that if it began to think of God it would have to give up its happiness. O Christians, I would have your faces so gleam with the light of Heaven that even the ungodly, if they care not for your secret life, may love the manifest joy that springs from it!

Many a young woman has been led to think of Christ by the holy cheerfulness of a godly mother. There is no doubt that Christian servants have often been the wedge, in the hand of God, to break a way for the Gospel into ungodly families by their holy, cheerful conduct. Talk of religion by all manner of means, but above all, live religion, and let your religion be cheerful! Let the world see that you serve a good Master! Do not go about slandering the King of Zion and say He starves His people and makes them of a sad countenance.

When the four young men in Babylon would not defile themselves with the King’s meat: “And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse than the children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king.” But they put it to the test, and said, “Let our countenances be looked upon before you, and the countenances of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as you see, deal with your servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and tested them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.” We will put it to the test, too. We will try if our joy is not greater than the worldling’s. We will stand foot to foot with them and see the result.

Now, Beloved, we have come to a conclusion, but I must have two or three last words. Beware of being like those speculative Christians who do not serve God at all, but are content to play games of puzzles with the Bible. It seems to be the genius of some professors, nowadays, to take up with explaining prophecies, or finding out novel interpretations of the types while they forget to do good to the people among whom they dwell. Let me warn you against that. The life of the Christian should be service, not speculation.

If you have time and leisure, addict yourselves to the pursuit of knowledge in the Word of God and despise not prophecies. Give a fair place to everything, but still always understand that all the speculations in the world, all the understandings of prophecy in the world are not worth the snapping of a finger compared to bringing forth fruit unto righteousness in the feeding of Christ’s sheep and lambs! That is the business of Christ’s Shepherds. Our business is to save souls!

Brethren, you will hear me expounding the Revelation one day, that is, when there is not another of the elect to save! When all the chosen are saved, we will preach upon the deep mysteries of Daniel and Ezekiel, but so long as souls are unsaved, we mean to keep to the plain Gospel— Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the simple Gospel of Jesus. Take this home with you, you who are so fond of knotty points—serve the Lord, and give up your star-gazing! And if you want gladness, you will find it there—you will not find it in your endless genealogies, and looking into the future!

There are other professors, too, who will do anything rather than serve God. The little service they do is done as slovenly as possible, and they are always unhappy. They want a comforting ministry! They want to hold on to the promises! My dear Brother, it is most probable what you want is neither. You need to serve God, for there is gladness! If some of you were to take a class in a Sunday school, you would soon find your spirits revive. Some of you dyspeptic Christians who find the Sunday drag heavily, if you were to go up into that alley or court to visit sick folks, you would find your hearts grow glad. Only try it, now, and give us a report! And if you do not find it a pleasant thing, I am much mistaken.

Our last word shall be a rehearsal of the text, “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Do not let us get to be like Martha, who complained because she served alone. Suppose we do? The fewer men, the greater honor! And if Mary will not serve the Master as we wish that she should, yet as she sits at the feet of Christ we will thank God that there are diversities of operations—but the same Lord! We will not get gloomy in spirit because we are not all serving God in one direction. Let us serve God with gladness, not like the elder brother in the parable, who said, “Lo, these many years did I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.”

Why had not the father given him a kid that he might make merry? Because he had never asked him! So if you and I have been at work in heaviness for years, like the elder brother, let us ask the Father to let us have a feast, too. And the surest way to get it is to go out into the fields and see if you cannot find some poor wandering Brother—for if you do get a feast, it will be when the prodigal comes home! The pith and marrow of what I have to say is, do not sleep away the few hours of this mortal life but be up and diligent in the cause of Jesus Christ, and be glad in it! Be glad, if you are saved yourselves, that you are called to be the means of saving others!

And so with holy service let us begin a new period of time, and go on till God shall take us up to serve Him with perfect gladness where they see His face, and never sin, but from the rivers of His Grace, drink endless pleasures!

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THE CLAIMS OF GOD  
NO. 1197

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Know you that the Lord, He is God: it is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts**

**with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting: and His Truth endures to all generations.” Psalm 100:3, 4, 5.**

BRETHREN, it is a trick of Satan to distract us from the most important and vital matters by the suggestion of trivial considerations. When the best blessings are asking for our acceptance, he will bring the most trivial things into our minds. He will fill our eyes with dust to prevent our looking to the bronze serpent for healing. From the preaching of Jesus he endeavored to distract human attention by debates upon the tithing of mint and anise and cumin—the making broad of the borders of one’s garments, the wearing of phylacteries—the straining out of gnats, and I know not what else.

He followed this method at Jacob’s Well. When our Lord spoke to the woman about Living Water and the salvation of her soul, the evil spirit prompted her to ask concerning Gerizim and Zion—“Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and You say that in Jerusalem men ought to worship.” With this same art Satan still works. It should be our business, not being ignorant of the devices of the enemy, to be more than a match for him by breaking away from all vain jangling and trivial questions. We need to go to the foundational Truths of God, the cornerstones of faith, the realities of life everlasting, the vitalities of godliness. These lie all Godward and Christward, away from the shadow land of ceremonies and vain speculations.

We must go to the eternal rock and everlasting hills whose golden tops are, to the eyes of faith, bright with the blessed daybreak. Let us get there, this morning, from the vanities of earth—and may the breath of the Spirit speed us toward the realities of Heaven—so to things essential we may give the attention which is essential to them. For what were we created, my Brothers and Sisters? I know no better answer than that of the Assembly’s catechism, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” There is a vast amount both of theology and philosophy in that simple answer which our old Divines have put into the mouth of a child.

Had man remained what God made him, it would have been his very element to glorify his God! To do the will of God would have been as natural to us as to breathe if we had not fallen from original perfection. I was about to say unconsciously, creatures which abide as God created them obey His will. But where there is consciousness there is added a supreme delight which makes their consciousness and willinghood the highest blessings. Look at yonder ponderous orbs—they are not stubborn with

the so-called vis inertiae—but joyfully roll along in their predestined courses because God commands them to keep their settled track.

See yonder watching stars—they close not their bright eyes, but smile upon us from age to age—those sentinels of Heaven quench not their lamps, but shine right on, day and night because God has said, “Let there be light,” and from them light must come. We hear of no rebellion in the spheres, no revolt against the Law which holds them to their celestial courses. Orion breaks not his bands. The Pleiades cease not their sweet influences. These orbs, mighty as they are, are as subservient to God as the clay to the hand of the potter. And where there is intelligence, as long as the intelligence remains as God made it, there is no revolt against His will.

Yon mighty angel, “whose staff might make a mast for some tall admiral,” counts it his honor to fly like a flash of light at the bidding of the Eternal. It is no demeaning of his dignity. It is no diminution of his pleasure to do the command of the Most High, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Were we, today, what we should be, it would be our element to love, to serve, to adore our God—and we should not need ministers to stir us to our pleasurable duty or remind us of Jehovah’s claims. Even the august language of our text would not be needed to bid us worship and bow down—and know that Jehovah is God who has made us, and not we ourselves—for we should bear this Truth in every particle of our being!

As things are, however, we need recalling to duty and urging to obedience. This morning, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, are will submit our hearts to such a call.

I. First we will consider THE CLAIMS OF GOD—ON WHAT ARE THEY GROUNDED? “Know you that the Lord, He is God; it is He that has made us and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving.” The claims of God are grounded, first of all, upon His Godhead. “Know you that Jehovah, He is God.” As Matthew Henry has very properly said, ignorance is not the mother of devotion, though it is the mother of superstition. True knowledge is the mother and the nurse of piety.

Really to know the Deity of God, to get some idea of what is meant by saying that He is God, is to have the very strongest argument forced upon one’s soul for obedience and worship. The Godhead gave authority to the first Law that was ever promulgated when God forbade man to touch the fruit of a certain tree. Why might not Adam pluck the fruit? Simply and only because God forbade it. Had God permitted, it had been lawful. God’s prohibition made it sin to eat the fruit. God gave no reason for saying to Adam, “In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.” His commandment, seeing He is God, was the supreme reason—and to have questioned His right, to disobey the law would have been, in itself, flat rebellion.

God was to be obeyed simply because He is God. It was a case in which to have introduced an argument would have supposed unwillingness on man’s part to obey. Adam could not need more than to know that suchand-such was the will of his God. This same Truth of Godhead is the authoritative basis of the moral law of the Ten Commandments. From Sinai no claim for obedience was set up but this, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” In that word, “GOD,” is comprehended the highest, the most weighty, the most righteous reasons for man’s yielding up his entire nature to the Divine service.

Because the Lord is God, therefore, should we serve Him with gladness and come before His Presence with singing. It was upon this point that God tested Pharaoh—and Pharaoh may be regarded as a sort of representative of all the enemies of the Lord. “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go.” There was no reason given, no argument, but simply this, “Thus says the Lord.” To which Pharaoh, fully appreciating the ground upon which God was acting, answered, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?”

So they stood, foot to foot, in fair battle—Jehovah saying, “Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let My people go”—and Pharaoh replying, “I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go.” You know how that battle ended. That song of Israel at the Red Sea, when the Lord of Hosts triumphed gloriously, was a prophecy of the victory which will surely come unto God in all conflicts with His creatures in which His eternal power and Godhead are assailed. The argument derived from the Godhead has not only been used with haughty rebels, but also with questioners and debaters.

Observe how Paul speaks. He has entered upon the thorny subject of predestination—a matter which none of us will ever comprehend, a matter in which it is better for us to believe than to reason—and he is met with this, “If all things happen as God decrees, why does He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?” To which the Apostle gives no reply but this, “No, but O man, who are you that replies against God?” Against God there can be no answer! If He wills it, so let it be. It is right. It is good because He so decrees it. Is He God? Submit! If there were no other argument, or reason, let the Godhead convince you.

Good men have been argued with in the same way for their profit. That is the core and pith of the Book of Job. There is Job, in conflict with his three friends, who are arguing that he must be a wicked man or else God would not so sorely smite him. To which reasoning he replies that he will hold fast his integrity and will not let it go. Then comes Elihu and he has much to say that is wise, but he cannot settle the matter. At last comes God into the controversy—and what is the Lord’s argument? Does He proceed to justify Himself in what He has done with Job, to give Job reasons for covering him with boils and pains, and excuse Himself for having taken a perfect and upright man and laid him prostrate on a dunghill?

No, but instead He unveils a portion of His Godhead and reveals His power in some such language as this—“Where were you when the foundations of the earth were laid? Declare, if you have understanding. Who has laid the measures thereof, if you know? Or who has stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations fastened? Or who lays the cornerstone thereof? Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? Does the eagle mount up at your command and make her nest on high? Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder

with a voice like He?” Thus the Lord displayed the greatness of His power while Job sat cowering down, and cried out, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You: therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

Ah, men and women, if you did but know what God is, and who He is— if but some flashes of His Divine Omnipotence, or any other of His glorious attributes were let loose upon you—you would perceive that He has the fullest claims upon your allegiance and that you ought to live for His Glory! Imagine that at this instant midnight darkness should settle over us, out of which should burst forth a thunderclap making each stone in this building tremble while down every one of yonder columns lurid lightning should begin to stream! Imagine that the earth beneath us rocked and reeled after the manner of the city of Lisbon, or Aleppo in years gone by! Conceive that peal on peal of that terrible thunder should be heard— why there is not one of us but would long to be the servant of that terrible God and instinctively inquire what He would have us to do!

Atheists, in times of tempest and storm, have found but little help in their philosophy. Like Pharaoh, they have been ready to cry, “Entreat the Lord for me.” But the reclining earth, or Heaven on a blaze—what were these? The touch of His finger and glance of His eyes would do far more. He touches the hills and they smoke, but as for Himself, who shall conceive of Him? Let us adore His overwhelming majesty and bow down before Him, for the Lord, He is God!

The second ground of the Lord’s claim is His creation of us. “It is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves.” We are, every one of us, the offspring of the Divine power. This is a fact of which we are informed by Revelation, but it is also one which every instinct of our nature agrees with. You never saw a child startled when it was told, for the first time, that God made him—for within that little mind there dwells an instinct which accepts the statement. The theory that we are not made, but are mere developments of materialism, wears upon its face all the marks of unsupported fiction! Certain statements are called axioms, because they are self-evident truths—but this is an axiom reversed, for it is a selfevident lie!

To an unsophisticated mind, its repetition is its refutation. Indeed, whenever I hear people mention it they seem unable to suppress a laugh, and I do not wonder, for even Nature, itself, forces them to despise what they pretend to believe. The evolution theory was originated, I have no doubt, either in Pandemonium or in Bedlam—it is worthy of either—but it is unworthy of any man who possesses either sanity or morality. No, we did not become what we are by chance or growth. God made us! This belief is the easiest escape from all difficulties and besides, it is true, and everything in us tells us it is so.

Now, since the Lord made us, He has a right to us. The property which God has in man is proved beyond dispute by our being His creatures. The potter has a right to make the vessel for what use he pleases—still he has not such absolute right over his clay as God has over

 us, for the potter does not make the clay—he makes the vessel from the clay, but the clay is there from the first. The Lord has, in our case, made the clay from which He has fashioned us, and therefore we are entirely at His disposal and should serve Him with all our hearts. Why, man, if you make anything, you expect to use it! If you make a tool for your trade, you reckon upon employing it according to your pleasure! And if it would never bend to your will, or be useful to your purpose, you would speedily put it away.

So is it with you. The Lord who made you has a right to your service and obedience. Will you not acknowledge His claim? Consider what He has made us. No mean things are we! Who but God could make a man? Raphael takes the pencil in his hand and, with a master touch, creates upon yonder canvas the most wondrous forms. And the sculptor, with his chisel and his hammer, develops amazing beauty. But there is no life, thought, intellect—and if you speak, there is neither voice nor answering. How different are you from the canvas and the marble—for in your bosom there is a mysterious principle which makes you akin to the Deity—for your soul can know reason, believe, understand and love.

I had almost called the soul infinite, for God has made it capable of such wondrous things! Thus has He trusted us with high powers and faculties, and lifted us up to a high position. Surely, then, it is ours to serve Him with a loving loyalty. I like to think that the Lord has made us—and to yield myself to Him on that ground—because while the grandeur of what He has made us calls us to homage, even the lowly side has its claim, too, and a sweet one. Our powers are finite, and sometimes we are troubled about that fact, wishing we could do more for our Lord—but we need not fear when we remember that He has made us and, therefore, fixed the measure of our capacity.

In Roger de Wendover’s, “Flowers of History,” an ancient Saxon chronicle, we read of a Saxon king who, riding through a forest, came upon a little Church in which a priest was saying prayers. This priest was lame and hump-backed and, therefore, the rough Saxon king was ready to despise him, till he heard him chant these words, “It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves.” The king blushed and admitted his fault. If, then, we are of small beauty or slender talent, let us not complain, but serve Him who has made us what we are. If we are amazed at a Truth of God which we cannot comprehend. If we find portions of God’s Word to be beyond our depth, let us not complain, but remember that the Lord could have made us understand all things if He had chosen, and as He has not done so. “It is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves.”

When any say to us, “Your religion is beyond you. The Truths you believe you cannot comprehend,” we answer, “We are quite satisfied it should be so, for the Lord has made us, and not we, ourselves.” If He has made us capacious to a larger degree than our fellows, we will give Him all the more honor. But, if we are vessels of small capacity, we will not wish to be other than our Maker would have us to be. Dear Brothers and Sisters, I cannot conceive any higher claim upon our service than this—that God has created us—except that the same Truth of God may be sung an octave higher! Common men may sing, “It is He that made us, and not we, ourselves.” Even the brute creation might join in that confession! But, O

you saints! Yours is a loftier note, for you have been twice made, bornagain, created anew in Christ Jesus, and after a nobler fashion you can sing, “It is He that made us, and not we, ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Creation has its claims, but election and redemption rise still higher! From those peculiarly favored the Lord must have peculiar praise.

A third reason for living unto the Lord lies in His shepherding of us. “We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.” God has not left us and gone away. He has not left us as the ostrich leaves her eggs, to be broken by the feet of the passersby. He is watching over us at every hour, even as a shepherd guards his flock. Over us all He exercises an unceasing care, a watchful Providence, and therefore we should return praise to Him daily. It has been well said that some men represent God as having taken the universe like a watch, wound it up, and then put it under His pillow and gone to sleep. But it is not so. God’s finger is on every wheel of the world’s machinery. God’s power is that which puts force into the laws of the universe—they were a mere dead letter if He were not powerfully active evermore!

Child of Adam, in your cradle you are not rocked by wild winds, but by the hand of Love. Daughter of affliction, you are not laid prostrate on yon bed to be the victim of heartless laws, but there is One who makes all your bed in your sickness with His own kind and tender hands. God gives us, day by day, our daily bread. God clothes us. He gives breath for these heaving lungs and blood for this beating heart. He keeps us in life and if His power were withdrawn we would sink immediately into death.

Now, therefore, because it is so, we are bound to give to our great Shepherd our daily service. You are the sheep of His hand. For you the hourly provision, the constant protection, the wise and judicious governance—for you the royal leadership through the desert to the pastures on the other side of Jordan! For you the power that chases away the wolf, for you the ability that finds out the pastures of the wilderness. For you those superior comforts which come from the redeeming Angel’s Presence and flow from the very fact that He is yours! Therefore, render to the Lord your homage and your praise. Men, because you are men, adore the God who keeps you living men—saintly men renewed and fed out of the storehouse of Divine Grace—serve your God, I pray you, with all your heart, soul and strength, because you especially are the sheep of His pasture and the people of His hand.

A fourth reason for adoration and service is given in the last verse of our text, it is the Divine Character—“For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His Truth endures to all generations.” Here are three master motives for serving the Lord our God. Oh that all would feel their weight! First, He is good. Now, if I were to lift up a standard in this assembly this morning and say, “This banner represents the cause of everything that is just, right, true, kind and benevolent, I should expect many a young heart to enlist beneath it, for when pretenders in all lands have talked of liberty and virtue, choice spirits have been enchanted and rushed to death for the grand old cause.

Now, God is good, just, right, true, kind, benevolent—in a word, God is Love—and therefore who would not serve Him? Who will refuse to be the servant of infinite perfection? Oh, were He not my God, but another man’s God, I think I would steal away to Him to be enlisted beneath the banner of such a God as He is! To keep the Laws of God must always be incumbent upon us because those Laws are the very essence of right—none of them are arbitrary—all of them the requirements of unsullied holiness and unswerving justice. Indeed, commands of God are something more than merely right—they are good in the sense of kind.

When God says, “You shall not,” it is only like a mother forbidding her child to cut its fingers with a sharp tool, or to eat poisonous berries. When God says, “You shall,” it is practically a direction to us to be happy, or at least to do that thing which, in due course, leads to happiness. The Laws of the Lord our God are right in all respects and, therefore, I claim from every one of you the obedience of your heart to God. Then it is added, “His mercy is everlasting.” Who would not serve One whose mercy endures forever? Observe, that He is always merciful. Never does a sinner come to Him and find Him devoid of pity. The Lord is merciful and gracious when we are children. He is equally so to us in middle life and when we grow gray in years He is still merciful.

We cannot wear out His patience nor exhaust His forgiving love. He has given us a Savior who always lives to make intercession for transgressors. What a blessing is this! So long as we sin we have an Advocate to plead for us! He has set up a Mercy Seat for us for all times and to it we may go as often as we will. He did not erect a Mercy Seat on earth for a hundred years and then withdraw it, but, blessed be His name, we always have the right of access and we have still a plea to urge, for Jesus’ blood has not lost its savor. There, too, is the Spirit of God always waiting to help us to pray—and whenever we wish to draw near to the Mercy Seat, He is ready to teach us what we should pray for as we ought—and even to utter groans for us which we, ourselves, could not utter.

Oh, who would not serve a God whose mercy is everlasting? Cruel is that heart which infinite gentleness does not persuade. If God is merciful, man should no more be rebellious. It is added, “His Truth endures to all generations.” That is to say you will not find in God one thing today and another thing tomorrow. What He promises, He will perform. Every word of His stands fast forever, like Himself, Immutable. Trust Him today and you will not find Him fail you, neither tomorrow, nor all the days of your life! The God of Abraham is our God, today, and He has not changed through the revolutions of years. The Savior whom we trusted in our boyhood is still the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Blessed be His name! I think it was this attribute of God that had the greatest charm to my young heart. It seemed so sweet to rest my soul with an Unchangeable God, so delightful to know that if I did once enjoy His love He would never take it away from me—that if He was once reconciled to me by the death of His Son, I should forever be His child and be dear to

His heart. This gave my heart gladness and I hold forth this Truth, now, as a sweet inducement to those present who have not trusted to the Lord that they should do so—for the Lord is good and His mercy is everlasting and His Truth endures to all generations!

Thus I have set before you the grounds of God’s claims. Are they solid? Do you consent to them? Oh, that Sovereign Grace would constrain each of us to live alone for the glory of God! It is His most righteous due.

II. Now very briefly, indeed, THE CLAIMS OF GOD—HOW HAVE WE REGARDED THEM? Answer for yourselves. Alas, some have paid no respect to these claims—in fact they have denied them and have said, in effect, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” Have I one such person here? I pray God to change his heart, for the gnat may much more wisely contend with the flame which has already burned its wings than you contend with your Maker! As surely as you live, God will vanquish you and make you acknowledge His supremacy! If you will not obey Him, He will dash you in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

A far larger number of persons, however, ignore, rather than oppose God’s claims. They have lived in this world, now, perhaps, to middle age and never thought about God, at all, though He has made them and kept them in being. That is the way that many a debtor has done with his debts. He has felt easy because he has not been dunned about them. But surely that is a doubtful honesty which rests in peace because the creditor does not happen to clamor! A truly honest man is dissatisfied till he has discharged his obligations—and every noble spirit will be discontented with itself because it has not paid its due to God. What if the Lord has used no severities—has sent no sheriff’s officers of sickness or bereavement—shall we not all the more heartily enquire, “What shall I render unto the Lord?”

Shall we rob God because He is merciful? Shall we make His goodness a reason for neglecting Him? Can it be right that we should never render to the Most High according to the benefits received? There are multitudes who, in theory, acknowledge all the claims of God, but as a matter of fact they deny them, or they evade them by a merely outward religiousness. They will not be honest, but they will go to Church. They will not cleanse themselves from iniquity, but they will be baptized. To live a holy life is a matter they care not for, but they will take the sacraments, believe in Jesus and yield themselves up to the love of God.

They will not, but they have not the slightest objection to joining in a procession or going upon a pilgrimage—thus giving God brass counters instead of gold, outward appearances instead of real obedience. The love of the heart and trust of the Spirit, man refuses to his Maker—and so long as he does so, all his offerings are in vain. Sorrowfully must we all confess, also, that where we have tried to honor the Lord and have done so, in a measure, by His Grace, yet we have failed in perfection. We have to confess that oftentimes the pressure of the body which is near, and of the things that are seen and tangible, has been greater upon us than the force of the things which cannot be seen, but are eternal. We have yielded to self too often and have robbed the Lord.

What shall we do in this case? Why, we have to bless our everlasting God and Father, that He has provided an atoning Sacrifice for all our shortcomings. And there is One, partaker of our nature, who stands in the gap on our behalf, in whom we can be accepted, notwithstanding all our shortcomings and offenses! Let us go to God in Christ Jesus! He bids us believe in Jesus and assures us of pardon and salvation on the spot if we do so! The demands of God are met in the life and death of His onlybegotten Son. Faith lets us see that they were met for us and that we are clear. Brothers and Sisters, we have believed, yes, and we will believe, that Jesus died for us—and here comes our joy—that we are delivered from the wrath of God, notwithstanding that we have fallen short of His commands.

And now, what follows? I feel, concerning it, this—that now there are more bonds to bind me to the service of God than ever! He has forgiven me for His name’s sake and washed me in the blood of His own Son—and I am His by firmer bonds than ever. No obligations are so forcible as those which arise out of Free Grace and dying love. Pardoned sin is no argument for the indulgence of future sin, but an abundant argument for future holiness in every heart that feels its power. O you saints of God, transgression being blotted out, you will no more transgress! Made His elect, you elect to serve Him! Being His adopted children, you rejoice to do your Father’s will! And now and forever you are the Lord’s!

III. This brings me to the concluding note of our discourse, which is this—THE CLAIMS OF GOD, WHEN THEY ARE REGARDED, HOW DO THEY INFLUENCE MEN? Give me your hearts a few minutes. I am persuaded, Brothers and Sisters, that the noblest form of man that is to be found on the face of the earth is the man who serves God. I am convinced that all other forms of manhood are faulty and imperfect in themselves, to a very high degree, and are also far inferior in force and beauty to that which is produced in men by consecration to the service of God.

A man who is guided by the Holy Spirit to live for the Lord is altogether a nobler being than one moved by a less lofty aim. Let me show you how healthy it is to serve God. The man who serves God, led by the Spirit of God to do so, is humble. Were he proud, it were proof, at once, that he was not serving God! But the remembrance that God is His Sovereign and has made him—that in His hands is his breath—makes the good man feel that he is nothing but dust and ashes at his very best. He cannot cry out with Nebuchadnezzar, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built”—he is far more likely to crouch down where Nebuchadnezzar did after God had taught him better and to say—“Now I extol and honor the King of Heaven.”

Serving God keeps man in his right place. It is a balance to him, without which he might be drifted to destruction like the myriads of butterflies which I have seen far out at sea, condemned, before long, to sink into the wave. At the same time, while it sobers a man, it fills him with joy, praise and gratitude, thus giving him sail as well as ballast. A man who loves to serve God receives mercies at His hand with great thankfulness and joy. He is content with the will of God and, therefore, is full of gratitude to

Him. And let me tell you there are no sweeter moments in a man’s life than those which are occupied with adoring gratitude! Nothing is more purging, or cleanses a man from earthly grossness, and from all the defilement of selfishness, than to serve the ever-living and ever-blessed God and to feel that there is One so much greater, so much better than one’s self, towards whom we aspire, for whom we live! Thus is a man at once humbled, cheered and elevated. The service of God is honorable as no other service is.

There is a man who lives for himself—his great object is to get money. Look at him and consider him well! Is not the greed of wealth one of the most beggarly passions that can possess a human bosom? Yon ant, which labors for its commonwealth, is, to my mind, up among the angels, compared with a man who sweats and toils and starves himself merely for the sake of heaping up for himself a mass of yellow metal! Can I more highly commend the lover of pleasure? What is pleasure? As the world understands it, it is a hollow sham, a veneer of mirth covering deep dissatisfaction. I often think, when I hear worldlings laughing at such poor nonsense, that they pull each other’s sleeves and say, “Laugh. You ought to laugh.”

I cannot see the mirth of their amusements, but they do. They struggle to seem happy, but what, after all, is it to have lived to be amused? To have spent all one’s powers in killing time? Is anything more contemptible? How horrible it is when man lives for lust and puts forth all his strength to indulge his passions! Brutes! Beasts! Alas, I slander the beasts when I compare them to such men! The man who lives for God is a far nobler being. Why, in the very act of self-renunciation and of dedication to God the man has been lifted up from earth and from all that holds him down to its dust and mire. He has risen so much nearer to the cherubim, so much nearer, in fact, to the Divine! This makes a man a man, for a man who serves is courageous and too manly to be a slave.

“No,” he says, “God bids me do such an act and I will do it straight ahead. And though such-and-such a thing you bid me do, since God has not commanded me, your bidding is no law to me. My knee was made to bow before my God and not to you—and my mind to believe what God reveals and not what you choose to tell.” He is the free man whom the love of God makes free. What wonderful proofs we have had of this throughout history, for the men who have served God have been the most intrepid of mortals. Behold the burning fiery furnace and the tyrant’s face almost as red as the furnace itself—he can hardly speak, he is choked with passion because the three young men will not worship the bronze image! But look how cool they are as they say, “The God whom we serve is able to deliver us, but if not, be it known unto you that we will not bow down to the image which you have set up.”

Here is the true style of manhood! The love of God makes heroes! Give a man a resolve to serve God and he is endowed with wondrous perseverance. Look at the Apostles, martyrs and missionaries of the faith—how they have pressed on despite a world in arms! When a nation has been apparently inaccessible they have found an entrance! When the first missionary has died, another has been ready to follow in his footsteps! The first Church, in her weakness, poverty and ignorance, struggled with philosophy and wealth and all the power of heathen Rome, till at last the weak overcame the strong, and the foolish overthrew the wise! They that serve God cannot be conquered—from defeats they learn victory! If they have to wait they can wait, for they have linked with the lifetime of the Eternal and God is in no hurry, nor are they.

If to secure a hearing for the Truth of God takes a generation, let it take a generation! If it takes 50 generations, let it take them, but the deed shall be done and the Truth shall be preached—and the idols shall be abolished—and God shall be adored! O Lord, Your service makes us akin to You! Blessed are they that wear Your yoke! How strong they grow, how patient to endure, how firm to stand fast, how swift to run! They mount with wings as eagles when they learn to serve You! The man who is led by the Holy Spirit to serve God is incited, thereby, to a zeal, a fervor and a selfsacrifice to which nothing else could bring him.

If you are familiar with the lives of the pioneers of the Cross, and especially with the deaths of the martyrs, you will have seen what Divine Grace can make of men! Are not their deeds sublime? Why, these men laughed at impossibilities and scorned difficulties! They counted the rack and the torture mere everyday things and learned to smile in the face of death, itself, because they served God! They never thought of running away, nor dreamed of retracting their testimony. Men said, “You are fools.” They were prepared to hear them say that and reckoned it a fulfillment of prophecy. The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together and said, “We will stamp you out.” They were prepared for that, also, but they were not stamped out!

They saw insuperable difficulties in their way to the eye of sense, but they did not care what the eye of sense saw—they used the eye of faith— and believing that they were engaged in the service of God they knew that God would be with them. They felt that all the forces of Nature on earth, and all the angels in Heaven, and all the attributes of Deity were on the side of the man who is doing God’s service—and therefore they went straight on! I have heard say that a mad man will often display the strength of 10 men and I know there is another side to that fact. For when a man becomes possessed with the Divine Spirit and is carried right away with it, there is no telling what force is in him—he will be 10 men in one!

Why, there are cases in which a nation of men seem to have been bound up into one single humanity when the man has surrendered himself to the service of God. Look at Martin Luther! You cannot regard him as an ordinary man. You cannot help viewing him as a conglomeration of a whole tribe of men! He believes he has the Truth of God to proclaim and in God’s name he preaches it! And if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the tops of the houses it is nothing to Luther! And if the Elector of Saxony tells him that he will no longer shelter him, what will he do? Why he declares that he will shelter himself beneath the broad shield of the eternal God! When the Pope issues a Bull against him, he burns the document! What did he care? He would have burned Rome, itself, for

that matter! The man had courage enough for anything.  
Or take John Knox, all emaciated, weak and ready to die—and yet so  
God-possessed, so inspired that he is not preaching for a quarter-of-anhour before you think he will dash the pulpit to shivers! He shakes the  
whole of Scotland and is more dreaded by the Popish Queen than an army  
of 10,000 men, for God is in the man! Oh, get to feel, “It is God’s will, and  
at all hazards I am going to do it, for God bids me.” Why, Sir, you may as  
well try to stop the sun in its course as to stop a man who is mastered by  
that conviction! If ever this driveling age of little men is to be lifted up into  
something like respectability and redeemed from the morass of falsehood  
in which it lies festering, we must breed a race of men who mean to serve  
God, come what may—and to make no reckoning but this—“Is this right?  
It shall be done. Is this wrong? Then it shall cease.”  
There must be no compromise, no talk about marring our usefulness  
and spoiling our position by being too exact. Usefulness and position! Let  
them be marred and spoiled if the Truth of God comes in the way, for God  
is to be followed into the jungle—yes—and down the wild beasts’ throats  
and into the jaws of Hell if He leads the way! God must be the Guide and  
if we follow God it shall be well with us. But if we do not, that which man  
thinks easiest, is, after all, the hardest. He thinks it easiest to be as near  
right as he can, but to run no risks. He thinks it best to keep peace at  
home, to yield many points and not be too Puritanical and too precise,  
and so on. That is the easy way—and the way which God abhors! It is the  
way which will end in a festering conscience and in being shut out of  
Heaven!  
The way to serve God is to be washed in the blood of Jesus—and then  
to obey the Lord without reserve and seek only His honor. This is the way  
to Heaven! And when we reach those blissful seats we shall be all in tune  
with the perfected, for they serve the Lord day and night—and find it bliss  
to do so. This preparation and service on earth is absolutely essential to  
the enjoyment of Heaven above! May God grant you, then, by His Holy  
Spirit, to yield yourselves up to God, to serve Him—and may we meet  
above. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 95, 96.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—187, 66 (SONG I), 195.  
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THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF GOD  
NO. 1265

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 6, 1875, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The truth endures to all generations.”  
Psalm 100:5.**

IT was very solemn work, this morning, to lay bare the sin of unbelief. [Sermon #1238, Beware of Unbelief.] It was the burden of the Lord to him who had to speak and it could have been but very small pleasure to those who had to listen. Nevertheless, I trust it was something better than pleasure to many and it drove their souls to pray to God for others. By His Grace sinners were moved, as we already know, to yield up their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. After meditating upon the heinousness of this sin— the sin of making God a liar—after even thinking of it, horror took hold upon my soul and it seemed to me that we ought to have a supplementary sermon, tonight, in honor of the Truth of God.

As we have, as it were, cleansed the temple and swept out the dreadful filthiness of giving the Lord the lie, it is now our part to offer a sweet smelling offering by declaring the faithfulness of the Lord. It is my earnest desire that each one of us may join in the devout exercise and bear our witness that, as far as we have known the Lord, He has been a God of truth to us. We will also rehearse the Scriptural Testimony to this great and certain fact that God cannot lie—and meditate upon the evidence that in Him and in all His actions, faithfulness shines in the highest possible perfection.

I desire in the courts of the Lord’s House and in the midst of His people, to extol Him whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. We will consider only two points, though those will subdivide into many others, and the first is, that, according to the text and according to fact, God is true. And, secondly, that God is true in all generations.

I. First, then, GOD IS TRUE. He is true in His very Nature. There is no deceit, falsehood, or error in the essential Nature of God. It could not be. We, from our very birth, have deceitful hearts, deceitful above all things. And in us, the old serpent who deceived our first parents has fearfully perverted our judgement and turned aside our souls from their integrity. As a result we often put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. And frequently we believe a lie and reject the truth. But God is not a man that He should lie. His very name is, “The Lord God, abundant in goodness and truth.” This is only a part of His holiness. The angels could not cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,” if God were not true. Admit for a single moment, untruthfulness on the part of God, and you have, at once, destroyed the wholeness, or holiness, of His ever blessed and adorable Character.  
What makes men untruthful? Whatever it may be, it is clear that nothing of the kind can operate with God. When a man tells a lie, it is often through fear—fear of the consequences of the truth. But the eternal Jehovah cannot dread consequences—He is Omnipotent—all things are in His hands. When a man utters a lie, he frequently does so because he thinks there is no other way of accomplishing his end. But the Infinite Wisdom of God is never short of resources—He knows how to accomplish His will and pleasure without adopting the mean devices and paltry schemes of poor pitiful man. Man sometimes promises what he cannot perform and then he is false to his promise. But that can never be the case with the Almighty who has but to speak and it is done—to command, and it stands fast.

Falsehood is the wickedness—I dare not call it the infirmity—the wickedness of little natures. But as for the Great Supreme, you cannot conceive Him acting in any manner that is otherwise than straightforward, upright and truthful. He is essentially a God of truth and righteousness. He must be so. The Lord our God is not only true in His Nature, but He is true to His Nature. We are not always true to ourselves. I have known a generous man who, in a spot, has acted very ungenerously. I have known a man universally admitted to be just and upright who, nevertheless, under pressure, has stooped to an action which he could not justify.

And we have read of persons exceedingly kind by nature who, nevertheless, have perpetrated cruel deeds in times of fear. They were not true to themselves. They did actions of which any candid person would say, “This is not like the man—we are astonished that he should do this. He seems to have stepped out of his ordinary path to do a something altogether foreign to his better nature.” But the Lord is always true to Himself. You never find Him doing anything that is not godlike. Select the acts of His Creation. If He makes an aphid to creep upon a rosebud, you will find traces of infinite wisdom in it—you shall submit the insect to the microscope and discern a wisdom in it as glorious as that which shines in yonder rolling stars!

If in Providence some minor event comes under your notice, in that event you shall find no deviation from the constant rule of right and love by which the Most High characterizes all His doings. There are no emergencies with God in which He could be driven to act an untruth. There are no pressures, no difficulties, no infirmities which could produce falsehood in Him. “I am Jehovah: I change not,” He says. Find Him where you will, He is what He was and what He ever shall be—the eternal and ever glorious I AM, over whom circumstances can have no kind of influence—who, indeed, knows nothing of circumstances, for He fills all places, and all times and all ages are present with Him! As for the creatures, they are as nothing in His sight and He is All in All. Ever true, ever true by Nature and His Nature is true is the Lord our God and adored be His thrice holy name! By Jesus Christ, we present to You, O Jehovah, our adoring praise!

Let us further notice that God is true in action. He has been true to the first transaction of which we are aware, namely, the making of the Eternal Covenant. What God has done in the eternity which we call the past, (but which to Him is as the present), we do not fully know. We have no reason to believe that we know much of what God has done. There may be as many other worlds and sorts of beings existent as there are sands upon the sea shore, for all we know. And the Lord may have been occupied in ages past with thousands of glorious plans and economies as yet unrevealed to man.

We cannot tell what He does, or what He has done. We are creatures of a day and know nothing. We are like insects that are born on a leaf and die amid our fellows at the setting of the sun—but He lives on forever. We talk of the “eternal hills,” but they are babes that were born yesterday, as far as He is concerned. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God.” We say, “Roll on, you ancient ocean!” but the ocean is not ancient—it is a drop that fell yesterday from the tip of the Creator’s finger!

We cannot tell all that the Lord did in the past, but we are told in Scripture that He made a Covenant in the olden time with His Son and with us, also, who are believers in His Son. And in that Covenant the chief point was that He would give His Son to be a ransom for many—that Jesus Christ should lay down His life for His sheep and give Himself for His Church. That was the most astounding promise that was ever made! Indeed, all the promises made to men are couched in that. Did He keep it? Did He take the Darling of His bosom, the pure and holy Christ, and send Him down to earth to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh?

Did He submit that His peer, His equal, the Son of the Highest, should wear the smock frock of a peasant and live among the sons of men as a carpenter’s son? Did He fulfill that wondrous Word and allow that dear Son of His to be nailed to a Cross—to die on that gibbet like a common felon? Did He permit Him to slumber in the dust among the dead? He did! Let Bethlehem and Calvary say, “The Lord is true! He has kept His Covenant—

*“True to His Word, He gave His Son  
To die for crimes which men have done.  
Blest pledge! He never will revoke  
A single promise He has spoke.”*

But it was a stipulation of that Covenant on the Lord’s side that Jesus Christ should have a people who would be His reward for His sufferings. The Father gave to Christ a chosen people—His sheep, His bride. These were to be His. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

Has the Divine Father kept that part of His Covenant? Beloved, He is keeping it every day! By the preaching of the Gospel and by other means in the hand of the Spirit, those for whom Jesus died are being called from among the mass of mankind! They are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus and they are saved! And whenever these present themselves before the Throne of God, He looks upon them as forgiven, regards them as one with His beloved Son and members of the body of Christ—and therefore He accepts them in the Beloved! For Christ’s sake He preserves them. For

Christ’s sake He sanctifies them. For Christ’s sake He will, by-and-by, glorify them! The Covenant of Grace has many promises in it, but not one of them has failed. As on Christ’s side, the Covenant was kept by His death, so on the Father’s side, the Covenant has been kept by the salvation of those whom Jesus redeemed from among men whom He gave himself a ransom for many.

Oh, Beloved, if it could be proven that the Covenant of Grace had failed. If there had been the smallest faltering in the fulfillment of this Divine Treaty, then might we speak with bated breath concerning the truthfulness of God, and the sinner would not be so guilty when he makes God a liar! But because in this grand Covenant transaction God has not swerved by so much as one jot or tittle from His promise, let His name be blessed! Praise Him, all you saints in Heaven! Praise Him, you saints on earth, for, “His truth endures to all generations.” God being thus true in His Nature and true to His Nature—and true to His Covenant—He has been true to all His purposes. Whatever God resolved to do, He has done. Whatever He decreed has come to pass!

There has been no change in the purpose of God at any time. Straight forward He goes and none can hinder Him. The opposition of men and the opposition of devils are as nothing—these can no more change His plans than an infant’s breath could alter the course of the sun. “Has He said and shall He not do it?” Who are you that hopes to thwart the designs of God? What He resolves to do, who shall dare to censure, much less to oppose? Who is he that shall say unto the Lord, “Your arm is short. You are not able to accomplish Your work”? Behold, His will is Omnipotence and He does as He pleases among the angels of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world. From the time He planned the whole scheme of Providence and Grace, nothing has ever made Him alter so much as one single line of it. There it stands, and He is true to it and true He will be, till, like a vesture, He shall fold up Creation as a worn-out mantle which has answered its wearer’s purpose.

This leads us to remark that God is true to His promises. There is not a promise which God has made, but what either He has kept it, or else, being dated for the future, He will keep it when the time appointed comes. Whatever He has said to the sons of men He has meant. How sadly common it is for men to make engagements in public while, in the long run, they never intend to do anything of the sort. How many promises are made to please the ear and cheat the heart? Blessed be the Lord, it is not so with Him! I love that passage in which it is written, “I have not spoken in secret, in the dark places of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek you My face in vain.” There are no mental reservations and Jesuitical equivocations with God—there is nothing in His secret purpose which will contradict the promise which He has given.

When He says to the wicked, “You shall surely die,” He means it. But when He says, “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool,” He means it. And when He says, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,” it is not mere talk. It is reality. He means it. He is “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” There is truth in what He says, and He fulfils it. Oh, how many of us there are here who can tell of the pardoning mercy of God! We have been forgiven! We have been saved! We sought the Lord and He heard us! We cried unto Him and He answered us! We came before Him with no plea except the blood of Jesus and He said, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins, which are many, are forgiven you.” Blessed be His name! His promises are true!

Now, child of God, I want you to note this upon the tablets of your heart. Be sure of it! For on your assurance of God’s truthfulness very much depends. You cannot call out to God and be accepted if you have any suspicion of the Divine veracity, for, “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Do not play with God’s promises! Do not say, “I hope they are true.” You have no business to hope about it. They are true! Do not go with a promise on your lips and say, “Lord, I sometimes hope that this will be fulfilled.” No, but say, “Lord, I know You cannot lie. You have said it and You will do it. As the pitcher hangs on the nail, so do I hang upon Your truth.” God deserves to be treated with unbounded confidence. Sooner shall Heaven and earth pass away than one promise of our God shall fall to the ground!—

*“He will not His great Self deny;  
A God all truth can never lie;  
As well might be His being quit  
As break His oath or word forget.”*

Now, as He is thus true to His secret purposes and true to His promises, I may add that He is true to all His published Word which He has made known to us in Holy Scripture. The Bible, having in it testimonies from God, is not a book for yesterday, nor shall it be merely a book for today, but for all time! It stands and must stand fast forever. Did the Law condemn sin? It condemns it still! Did the Gospel provide pardon 1,800 years ago? It does so still! Is there a promise that believers shall be saved? They are saved still! Is there a declaration that unbelievers shall be damned? Damned they must be, for that Word can never alter! Of every gracious declaration of the Most High we may sing—

*“Engraved as in eternal brass  
The mighty promise shines,  
Nor can the powers of darkness erase  
Those everlasting lines.”*

Every Word of God is true and stands fast like the pillars of Heaven! Neither can it ever be changed—rest assured of this.

Further, let me assure you, tonight, that God is true in every relation that He sustains. Is He a King? The kingcraft of God is not like that of many princes who think that their ambassadors ought to be sent abroad to tell lies for the good of their countrymen at home. No, there are no deceits, tricks or plots with the court of Heaven! Nothing of what is called finesse and intrigue enter into the government of God! It is all straightforward with Him and so plain and clear that it baffles villainy, countermines the mining of deceit and makes the diviners mad! O blessed King upon

Your throne, Your courtiers are men of clean hands who love the Truths of God in their hearts! They dwell with You, but as for liars and deceivers, You have said that they shall be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The Lord will be true as a Judge. When you and I come to be tried before Him there will be no bribes taken. There will be no inducing of witnesses to commit perjury, no twisting of the law. In righteousness shall He judge the world and His people with equity, for He is just and true in all His ways and will, by no means, clear the guilty. He will only clear those whom He has made righteous through the righteousness of His Son. Blessed be His name, He is true as a Father. Many fathers are bad fathers—hard, forgetful, selfish—we pity the children who have such parents. They are not fathers at all, in the true sense of the word. But God is a true father, pitying and compassionate, helping and loving and providing for His children.

And He is a true friend. There are friends in the world of a sad sort. Friends? Perhaps we have a dozen of them—friends while we have a shilling—but they leave us when our purse is empty, or we are under a cloud. “A friend in need is a friend, indeed,” says our proverb, and such a friend is God, for, oh, how He helps the helpless! How the widow and the fatherless, and those that have no helper, look up to Him! And how in our despair, when we are sorely pressed and crushed under a burden of trouble, we have turned to Him and He has helped us, truly helped us, for He is a practical Friend. But I should tire you if I went through all the relationships in which God sustains us—only I sum up all by saying that He is true and thorough in them all.

There is no pretence or mockery with Him. And I will close this head by saying that God is true to every man, to every woman in the world. When you get to the end of life you will find that everything that God said is true. You may have doubted it, but experience will prove it. You may call Him a liar, as we proved that unbelievers do, this morning, but you will find Him true—true to your regret if you die rejecting Him, but assuredly true in all respects. Some dare to charge God with favoritism and I do not know what they will not say. Such things have I heard said about the living God that I will not defile my lips by repeating them. But, Sinner, you will find Him to be impartial. Your judgement before God will be so just that you, yourself, will agree with it!

Though it sends you down to Hell, you will be obliged, by your speechless confusion, to confess that God has kept His Word with you and has dealt out impartial justice. You will not at any time be able to turn round upon Him and say, “This is not what was written in Your Bible. This is not what Your ministers told me. This is not what my conscience tells me should be.” No, no, but as it is written, so shall you find it! Do not risk the Lord’s driving you forever from His Presence, for if you die in unbelief He will do so. If you reject Him, He will reject you. And if you despise His Son, He will despise you. If you will live and die impenitent and unbelieving, you shall be driven from His Presence into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth—and He has told you so!

I sometimes pity persons who are brought up before the magistrates for breaking some of our new laws which the magistrates, themselves, cannot administer and which nobody can understand. The magistrate says, “It is clear you have broken a law,” and the man replies, “I did not know it.” I pity a man in that case! But you do know the Law of the Lord! God’s Laws have been published, fastened up in your conscience and printed in the Bible which is in all your houses! And so if you sin against His commands, you sin against light and knowledge. And you will be utterly without excuse when He calls you to His bar.

There I leave this great Truth of God, having illustrated it in a considerable number of ways. God is true.  
II. The second head was to be that GOD IS TRUE IN ALL GENERATIONS. This fact breaks up into three heads—in the past, in the present and in the future. I should have to detain you here for a long time if I were to go into that first head at any length. God has been true in the past. The whole of history, sacred and profane, goes to prove that. Take the beginning of our race. God warned Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they should surely die. He indicated to them, therein, a spiritual death which signifies separation from God. In the day they ate thereof they did die—die as to all spiritual life and Adam, instead of welcoming God, went to hide himself among the trees of the garden and felt that he was naked.  
God then told him that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread and that his wife should bring forth her children with bitter pangs. Has it not been so? Every man’s labor and every woman’s travail prove that God is true. But then the Lord came in with a voice of mercy and He said, “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head,” and Jesus came, the woman’s promised Seed, and He has bruised the head of Satan and proclaimed to us salvation through the Man, the Mediator, who is also God over all, blessed forever. The first promise has been kept. Years rolled on and God destroyed the world with a flood. You know the story. God said He would and He did it. He told Noah to go into the ark and He would save him. Noah went in and God saved him.  
But when he came out, perhaps Noah was half afraid the world would be destroyed again and, when a shower began to fall, he did not know but what the sluices of Heaven had been pulled up again and that once more the floods might come. Presently he saw in the skies that wonderful sight which I think none of us can look upon without delight—a rainbow, a bow of many colors, not a bloodstained bow, but a bow of joy, many-colored, like streamers of delight—a bow not turned downwards to shoot at us, but upwards, as if we might shoot our prayers up to God upon it. A bow without an arrow, to show that God has not come out to war with men.  
And what did God say? “I, behold, even I, do set My bow in the cloud, for behold I make a covenant with the world that seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, shall never fail. And I will no more destroy the earth with a flood.” Has He not kept it? Have you not felt winter’s cold going through your bones? Did you not sweat with the heat of summer? Did He not say that He would give you the harvest time and the heat? He has kept His Covenant! Every time you see the rainbow in Heaven, no, every time you walk upon the earth and find that it is not transformed into one dreary, dreadful, all-devouring sea, you may say to yourself, “God is true.”  
The world went on and there came an Abraham into the world. And God said, “Get you hence, from your kindred, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will give it to you and to your seed after you.” Abraham believed God and went into a land that he knew nothing of. He found it full of inhabitants and he dwelt among them in tents, wandering up and down. It did not look likely that God would give him that land, nor to his seed after him, for he had no children and he was more than a hundred years old. And his wife was well stricken in years. He had to wait a long time, but Isaac came, at last, and made glad that household.  
Four hundred and fifty years went on. Abraham had been gathered to his fathers and yet there was not an Israelite in all Canaan! Not a foot of that land belonged to them except the cave of Machpelah in which the dead Patriarch still lay. But the time came for Israel to come up into the promised land and they did come. God sent down Moses and told Pharaoh to let His people go, for the time was come and they must go up to their own land. Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I will not obey His voice, neither will I let Israel go.” But he had to change his tune and bow before the stammering man who spoke for God!  
God chastened and plagued Egypt till, at last, they let Israel go—and they did go, though the Red Sea rolled before them—and Pharaoh’s host pursued them! They did go, and though the wilderness yielded them no meat, the heavens dropped with manna! They went through the great howling wilderness and failed not for drought, for the rocks gushed with rivers! They did go till they came to Canaan and there they were called to fight with Anakim and giants. And they threw down the battlements of their cities! And they smote the Canaanites with great slaughter, took possession of the land and dwelt therein—every man under his vine and under his fig tree—for the Lord had said it, and the Lord fulfilled it.  
He gave the land to them and they possessed it in due time. Thus, you see, I might keep on with history as long as you pleased, but it all goes to show that if God says it, He does it. He said that Edom should become a desolation and the traveler can hardly pass through Petra at this present day. He said that Tyre should become a place for the mending of nets and it is still so in its desolateness. He said that Egypt should be the meanest of all the nations and who that knows Egypt, where the stick is used on almost every man, does not know that no people yield so meanly to a despot’s will as the Egyptian race? Everything has happened that the Lord has spoken up to this moment.  
Now, instead of taking you back to ancient or modern history, I would like to take you to the history of your mother or of your grandmother. I think of my dear old grandfather and of what he used to say to me. If he were here tonight—I am glad he is not, because he is in Heaven, and that is a much better place for him—but if he could come from Heaven and could talk as he used to do when he was here on earth, he would say, “Ah, my boy, I did find Him a faithful God.” He had a large family and a very small income, but he loved his Lord and he would not have given up his preaching of the Gospel for anything, not even for an imperial crown!

He had told me often how the Lord provided for him. He had a little farm to get his living upon it and he had a cow which used to give milk for his many children. And one day when he came up to the cow it fell back with the staggers and died. Grandmother said, “James, how will God provide for the dear children now? What shall we do for milk?” “Mother,” he said, “God said He would provide, and I believe that He could send us 50 cows if He pleased.” It so happened that on that day a number of gentlemen were meeting in London. Persons whom Grandfather did not know were sitting as a committee for the distribution of money to poor ministers, and they had given it to all who had asked for it.  
My grandfather had never asked for any. He liked to earn his own money. He did not send in any petition or appeal. Well, after the gentlemen had distributed to all who had asked, there was five pounds over and they were considering what they should do with this balance. “Well,” said one, “there is a Mr. Spurgeon down at Stambourne, in Essex, a poor minister. He stands in need of five pounds.” “Oh,” said another, “don’t send him five pounds. I will add five to it. I know him. He is a worthy man.” “No,” said another, “don’t send him 10 pounds. I will give another five pounds if somebody else will put a fourth five to it.”  
The next morning came a letter to Grandfather with nine pence postage due! Grandmother did not like to pay out nine pence for a letter, but there was 20 pounds in it, and as my grandfather opened it he said, “Now, can’t you trust God about an old cow?” These things I tell you, and you smile, and well you may, but, oh my soul laughs, and my face laughs on both sides, when I think how faithful God has been to me! I can tell you about my grandfather, but I will not tell you about myself, for that would be almost as long as the history I spoke of. From the day that I left my father’s house to this day, if there is no other man in the world that can speak of the faithfulness of God, I can. I must, I will and none shall stop me of this glorying.  
He has never lied unto me, or failed me, or forsaken me, but has kept His Word to the moment in every respect. No, I sometimes think He has gone beyond His Word and done for me exceedingly abundantly above what I understood Him to promise. He has exceeded my expectations even when my expectations have been at full tide. If I were to invite the Brothers round us, one by one, to get up and were to say “Brother, has God kept His Word to you in the past? Speak as you have found Him,” they would all testily to the Lord’s truth! And, oh, it is not merely the Brothers, but there are many aged woman here—there are many widows here— there are many poor tried Believers here, and as I look round I know the stories of some of you and I know what you would say. It would be, “Blessed be His holy name, not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised.” There is the testimony of history, ancient and modern. There is the testimony of the biographies of our ancestors and the testimony of our autobiographies as well. God is true, glory be to His name!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I was to have said next, that God is still true. Not only was He true, but He is true—He is true tonight. He is true tonight! If you want to know that, go down many of our streets in London tonight. Go to the casual ward of the workhouse, if you like, and just pick out the vagrants—those that are in rags and poverty. What do you find? In nine cases out of 10, how did they get there? What brought them to poverty? Drink and laziness! And what did God say? “The drunkard and the sluggard shall come to poverty.” God said they would and they do. He says, “The sluggard shall clothe himself with rags.” Every time I see a sluggard in rags, I say to myself, “God is true. He said it would come to that.” He tells us that sin will bring sorrow, and do you not see it everywhere? Most of the misery in the world can be traced to some sin or other—some direct breach of the Divine commands. God is true.  
On the other hand, look, tonight, on many a happy face. If I were to question the man who owns that happy face—What makes you so happy?—he would say, “Because my sins are forgiven me.” “How came that about?” “I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and I had the promise that my sins should be forgiven me, and they have been.” “You had a burden once, had you not?” “Yes.” “And you have got rid of it? Did you go to Jesus Christ’s Cross with that burden?” “Yes, and I got rid of it just as He said I would.” “Did you do anything more than that?” “No, I simply trusted Jesus. He said I should have peace and I have it.” “Well, but how about your daily troubles? Do you have any?” “Oh, yes. I do.” “I ask you that question because Jesus said, ‘In the world you shall have tribulation.’ Do you find it so?” “That I do,” says one.  
But then He said, “In Me you shall have peace.” Do you find it so, Brothers and Sisters? How was it with you last week when you had all those troubles? Did you enjoy peace, even then? Did you hear Him say, “Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God: believe, also, in Me”? And did you believe in Him and find at once that you could cast your burden upon God? Oh, yes, the saints will testify unanimously that whenever they trust God it is well with their souls! And tonight, as well as in the past, we have a faithful God!  
Have we present tonight any friend in great distress? You have forgotten it, I suppose, during the service, but now you remember that the brunt of the storm will be upon you tomorrow. Does this alarm you? You are a child of God and do you think that your Father will leave you in the time of need? No, I will not ask you whether you think so, because it would be a crying shame if you did your Lord such an injustice. If we never doubt our God till we have a cause for it, it will be a long while first. “But it is a new trouble, Sir.” Yes, but He who was your God of old will help you through the new trial. Go to Him again. “Ah, but I dread the loss of a very dear and precious one.” Yes, but as His will is, so should your will be. God makes all things work together for good. Do you not believe it? All things are moving according to the decree of goodness and wisdom—and you must not doubt it. Like Jacob, you sometimes say, “All these things are against me,” but they are not, they are all for you. God is ordering all for the best.  
Now, last of all, God will be true. I do not know how far we have to go before we shall reach our journey’s end, but this I do know, the whole of the road that we have to travel is paved with love and faithfulness, and we need not be afraid. We shall soon lie down upon our beds and fall asleep in death. I bless God for that. I said to a Brother the other day, “So-andSo has gone Home,” and the Brother replied, “Well, where else should He go?” Where should a child go, when the day is over, but home? It is very sweet to think that the Lord’s own children shall all go Home, by-and-by. He has promised that we shall be with Him where He is, and we shall find it so! Only, like the Queen of Sheba, we shall be astonished when we get there and we shall say, “The half has not been told us.”  
We shall leave these poor bodies behind in the grave for a while, but they will not be lost. They are old companions of ours on the journey of life and, though the worms devour them, yet in our flesh we shall see God! The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and, body and soul, one perfect man shall “behold the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off.” God has said so, and it will be so! We shall leave the Church behind us, but God will take care of His Church. We need not fret about that—He will not fail her nor forsake her. We shall leave the world behind us and the world is very wicked, but it will not prevail against the Truth of God, for the Lord has said the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church, nor shall they.  
We need not be worrying about what will happen when Mr. So-and-So dies. People are always putting the question, “What will they do when their minister is gone?” Do? Trust in God as they did before! God is alive! Martin Luther once said to his friend, when he was fretting and worrying, “When will you leave off trying to govern the world?” And we may say the same to one another when we are anxious and fretful. God does not need any of us. We think ourselves mightily important but we really are no more important to God’s plans than the caterpillar in the kitchen garden is to a Napoleon when he is marching his armies across a continent! We are nothings and nobodies, except when God pleases to use us—and He can do better without us than with us many times, for we get in His way.  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, matters are all right, for they are in God’s hands! The everlasting God lives and He will work His purposes, for He is the true God! The heathen will be converted to Christ, for the Lord has said, “Ask of Me, and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.” “As I live,” says the Lord, “surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” It shall be done! It must be done. Rest sure of it! “The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.” Antichrist on yonder seven hills must be thrown down—the crescent of Mahomet must wane—the gods of the heathen must be utterly abolished. Must, I say, for is it not written, “He must reign till His enemies are made His footstool”?  
I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet and, therefore, I do not dare set up a theory of futurity, but this one thing I know—“The Lord reigns”— and the Lord will accomplish His purposes and preserve His Church in the world. The Truth of God shall never die and Christ’s Throne shall never shake, for the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Thus have we tried to declare the truthfulness of God. How short of the mighty theme have we fallen! These two words and we have done. Since God is true, you children of God, why do you mistrust Him? Since God is true, you sinners, why do you belie Him by your unbelief? Echo answers, “Why?” And so we leave it. And unto Father, Son and Holy Spirit be glory, forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SECTION—Psalm 85.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 100 (VERS. IV), 193,1,009. **THE BAPTIST BULLETIN**

THE PILGRIM FATHERS— This is actually a reprint of Brown’s work, published in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. It would be good for every American (assuming that he would read with an open mind ) to read this account of the noble band so indelibly tied in with the origins of our nation. It is interesting to read quotations such as this—“For that the propagation of the Gospel is a thing we do profess above all to be our aim in settling this plantation, we have been careful to make plentiful provision of godly ministers, by whose faithful preaching, godly conversation and exemplary life we trust not only those of our own nation will be built up in the knowledge of God, but also the Indians may, in God’s appointed time, be reduced to the obedience of the Gospel of Christ.” Would that such a purpose would be characteristic of our nation as a whole today!

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1230 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A HOLY AND HOMELY RESOLVE  
NO. 1230

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when will You come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” Psalm 101:2.**

THE 100th Psalm is perhaps the best known song of praise in the Word of God. To sing the “Old Hundredth” has been a habit of worshippers from generation to generation—the custom of every succeeding age as it is still our custom. “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all you lands.” Now, it is somewhat significant that the 101st, which immediately follows it, should be such a practical Psalm—all about how a man should walk in his house, how he should put away sin from his very eyes and keep himself from evil companionship. What does it seem to teach us but this, that the best praise is purity and that the best music in the world is holiness?

If we would extol the Lord, the best way to do it is to labor to keep His mind before us and to walk in His commandments. The sweetest sounds that ever came from the heaving bellows or the organ pipes can never have so much melody in them as a life that is tuned to the example of Christ! If we obey, we praise. He sings best who works best for God. There is no praise that excels that which is like the praise of angels, “who do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.”

I suppose that this Psalm was written by David about the time when he was invested with regal authority and took the reins of government in his hands. Three times, you will remember, he was anointed king. First, in the house of his father, Jesse the Bethlemite, when, “Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren” (1 Sam. 16:13). Secondly, at Hebron, when, “The men of Judah came and there they anointed him king over the house of Judah” (2 Sam. 2:4). And thirdly, when all the elders of Israel came to the king 7 ½ years afterwards, “And David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel” (2 Sam. 5:3).

With the solemn responsibilities of government in view he sat himself down and considered how he would behave himself when he should come to the throne. And this was the resolution which he passed and labored, by the Grace of God, to carry out. It has been well said that in this Psalm David was merry and wise. He was merry, for he said, “I will sing of mercy and judgment.” And he repeated his resolution to sing by saying, “Unto You, O Lord, will I sing.” Such merriment as that were well for all of us to cultivate! We cannot sing too much when we sing unto the Lord! And, provided that the songs are the songs of Zion, the more of them we sing

and the merrier we are in singing them, the better.

But he was merry and wise, for, having spiritual merriment, he also sought to have spiritual holiness. And so he passed this resolution—“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” Our meditation, then, will be of a practical character, and it will divide itself thus. First, in the text we have a comprehensive resolution—“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” Then, as if he were amazed at his resolve, feeling how much he had resolved to do and how little power he had to do it, we have, in the second place, a devout ejaculation—“O when will You come unto me?” But, still being firmly set upon his first hallowed resolution, he returns to it, again, and that leads us, in the third place, to notice a particular application of his resolution. He applies it to his own domestic household life—“I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.”

May God the Holy Spirit, who alone can make us practically holy, help us, now, while we consider the holy resolutions before us.  
I. WHAT A COMPREHENSIVE RESOLUTION THIS IS! “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” With a full knowledge of all the care and circumspection it entailed on himself—and with as clear an apprehension of all the risks of popularity it involved among his subjects—this was David’s deliberate choice. Influenced by the Grace of God he, like his son Solomon after him, chose wisdom as the principal thing and accounted the fear of the Lord as the choicest safeguard.  
Many a young man, if he were about to be promoted to a throne, would say, “I will behave myself grandly. In the dignified position to which I am about to be lifted up, I will be every inch a king. I will make them know how stately is my bearing, how sovereign is my word, how nobly I can play my part, how well a crown befits my head. There shall be no Shah or Sultan more dignified than I.”  
David might have chosen an empty conceit, but he did better, he elected a discreet conduct. He said not, “I will behave myself grandly,” but, “I will behave myself wisely.” There are many, too, who, having David’s opportunity, would have said, “I will have a merry time of it! Once let me mount to Israel’s throne, I will give myself up to the full indulgence of every passion. There shall be nothing that my soul shall lust for but what my hand shall grasp. Let me have horses and chariots in abundance! Give me singing men and singing women. I will get myself all manner of the delights of the flesh with whatever enjoyments I can devise. I will behave myself right joyously when once I come into power.”  
Not so David. His deliberate choice was neither grandeur nor pleasure, but wisdom. “I will behave myself wisely.” Now, Brothers and Sisters, there must be some of you just starting in life. Before that household is formed, sit down and consider what is the best way of action. Or, perhaps, though you have not yet left your father’s house and commenced business for yourself, you contemplate doing so. This, then, is the time to take stock of your moral resolutions. Or, it may be you are in such a condition that you are now starting afresh, commencing life anew, though perhaps farther advanced in years and experience of the world than the young man I have just referred to.  
Now, how will you act? What will you choose? You shall be happy, indeed, if the Grace of God leads you to say, “I choose wisdom, the truest and best wisdom. Be it mine to live as God would have me live— understanding His Testimonies and yielding obedience to His Laws. Gladly would I live as the Incarnate Wisdom lived when He was here below. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” I say it was David’s deliberate choice. Oh, that every young man and woman here would emulate his example! Oh, that every one of us in our present condition and in full view of whatever prospects may be opening up before us, might be led now, once and for all, with the full consent of all our powers, to say, “Whatever happens to me, this is my resolution—I desire to behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Should others run after gain or fame, ease or luxury, let them cry, ‘Who will show me any good?’ Let them make self their idol, or follow after gold. As for me, my soul is made up to this one purpose and to seek but this one thing—I would be wise, my God, by Your Grace, and behave myself wisely in a perfect way.”  
This deliberate choice of David was, no doubt, suggested by a sense of necessity. He felt that he needed to behave himself wisely. He was to be a king—and a foolish king is no ordinary fool! It used to be a proverb some three or four hundred years ago that every king was born a fool. And in truth they generally so acted as to merit the disgrace. The common people were not too severe in the judgment they passed on their rulers! But, alas, for the misfortunes of a country whose king is a fool! You know what troubles came upon the Jewish nation through Rehoboam and others who were too foolish to sway the scepter righteously.  
David could hardly fail to remember that as he succeeded the dynasty of Saul, Saul’s descendants would survive and seek to regain the crown— therefore he would need to act very discreetly to preserve himself from the pretenders and their faction. He knew that enemies would be sure to track his course to see if they could find any fault with him. He needed, therefore, to have great wisdom if he was to walk aright. “Well,” you say, “but the lesson concerns people of rank and pedigree—it does not concern us— we are not going to be kings.” Granted. That may be so, but you need wisdom in every grade of society, however lofty or however lowly it may be. The humblest waiting maid, as a Christian, needs wisdom to do her duty and adorn her position.  
Those entrusted with children need peculiar wisdom, for a child’s mind may be warped by a servant as well as by a superior teacher. Any little misfortune happening to a child through your negligence may do it serious damage. If you are a tradesman, you need wisdom in such an age as this, with competition so fierce and temptation so abundant. And I am sure, if you are a father and you wish to see your children trained up in the fear of God, you have a task before you that might tax the wisdom of a Solomon! It takes true wisdom to judge this boy’s disposition and to understand that girl’s character, so as neither to be too severe nor too lenient.

Much wisdom is needed to know how to deal with each child just as a gardener deals with each separate plant in the conservatory—the one needing dry heat and the other needing moisture—and not injuring or destroying either by applying the wrong treatment. Many have been injudicious with their children, to their own anguish of heart in later days. O parents and heads of households! Masters of factories! Managers of business houses and you, too—you working men and servants—you all need wisdom and you must have it, or you will make shipwreck. If the fisherman’s little boat is wrecked through mismanagement, it is as bad for him, especially if he is drowned in it, as if he had lost the greatest steamship that ever plowed the waters and perished with the vessel. It is his all! And your all is embarked in the momentous voyage of life. If you make shipwreck of the life that God has given you, and the humble position in which He has placed you, it is your all, and to you it is as much a ruin as if you had been a monarch! You need to behave yourselves wisely whatever your vocation in the world may be.  
Moreover, David recognized that to behave one’s self wisely, one must be holy, for he says, “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” Observe that. He felt he could not be wise if he were unacquainted with the true ideal of absolute unblemished perfection! Wisdom lay only there. Folly might suggest a specious but vacillating policy. That, however, would be an imperfect way. Always remember this. In common life the wisest thing is the right, straight, undeviating course. The right thing is always the wisest. Sometimes it looks as if it is really necessary to go off the straight line—(you mean to come back again, you know)—just to take a short cut across Bye-Path Meadow and leave the road, for it is covered with flint stones. Surely, you think, it must be better to just cut that corner off.  
It seems so. It never is. The tale of Bye-Path Meadow is a book of lamentations from beginning to end. Thousands have tried it, but always with the same result. The wise man will keep along the King’s Highway, cost what it may. We have heard of young men who, under extraordinary pressure, have felt as if they must relax integrity a little to obey a master and thus keep the position they hold. Well, from that time forward their nose has been to the grindstone as long as they have lived! And if they had had the manliness, let alone the godliness, to do the right thing, it would have been the turning point in their entire career and have saved them from a thousand sorrows!  
But you do not need to be a philosopher and consult huge books to discover how you ought to act under any circumstances. The way to act in every case is to fear God and keep His commandments. Constantly I receive letters asking special counsel for peculiar emergencies. It is to me an everyday annoyance. Persons tell me of painful dilemmas in which they are placed and frequently wish me to reply to such and such a place, without giving their names. Now, they need not ever write to me for indulgences. I have no power to grant them! All trouble might be spared. Straight ahead!—that is the way to go in every case! If the conscience of man is elastic, the Law of the Lord is inflexible.  
“What, and lose all I have?” Yes. You will lose less by doing right than you can possibly lose by doing wrong, for if a man were to lose all the property he possessed by a right action, it were better than that he should lose his soul by deliberately choosing to avoid poverty or acquire wealth instead of seeking to abide in the favor of God. “I will behave myself wisely,” says David. But he knew that the perfect way, the way of right, the way of God, was the way of wisdom. Prince Bismarck may have a long head and a far-seeing eye. And he may be able to dictate the shrewdest policy under the most distracting complications. But were you to consult him in any strait of your own, he could not tell you anything that is wiser than this—to do justice and righteousness and truth towards your fellow men, and to walk humbly with your God.  
Keep to the eternal principle which God has revealed! Keep to the sacred instinct which the Holy Spirit sows in every regenerate heart. Keep to the example of your Lord and Master who has bought you with His precious blood! Should it cost you trouble—should it cost you your life—“it were better to enter into eternal life crippled or maimed than, having two eyes or two feet, to be cast into Hell fire.” And, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” The perfect way is the wise way and the wise way the perfect.  
David seems to have felt that this resolution would cost him a great deal of effort and strength. He does not look upon it as a light thing. He weighed it in all its bearings before he said with so much emphasis I WILL. “I will—behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” Though he does not say as much, he fully implies determination without power. “My will or desire is to behave myself wisely. My dependence is on Him whose cause I espouse.” The next clause seems to say, “I must have more Grace and I must get it, too. I must have more help than ever I can find in myself—I must use all the means of Grace. I must call in God to be my Helper in this matter, for, whatever it may cost, I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.”  
He felt that character was too momentous to be messed with—that it must be of sterling metal—or else it were mere dross and that the actions of a man’s life were too signal to be insignificant. It shocks me—I cannot help saying it—it shocks me to my very soul when I hear persons talk about the Doctrines of Grace, which are dear to my heart as life itself, but uphold the principles while they ignore the practices of godliness, for their lives are inconsistent with their professions! I have known professors that never talk so well about theology as they do when they are half drunk— and never seem to be so sound in the faith as when they can hardly stand on their legs. They will tell you that good works are nothing at all, and they glory in Free Grace.  
Ah, dear Friends, God save you from being Mr. Talkative who can discuss at great length upon Free Grace but has never felt the power of it! If the Grace of God does not save a man from drunkenness, from lascivious conversation, from lies in trade and lewdness in jests, from slandering your fellow man and scowling at your fellow Christians, then I think the Grace of God must be a very different thing from what I read of in this precious Book! Either my judgment is at fault or your pretensions are spurious. The Grace of God, when it does come, comes freely as the Sovereign distinguishing gift of Heaven—but it makes men to differ and it makes them differ in holiness of character. If a man shall say to me, “Character—I don’t care anything about that,” I am not quick to answer him, neither need anybody care much about him.  
I think Rowland Hill was right when he said that he did not believe in a man’s religion if his cat and his dog were not the better for it—if everybody in his house were not the better for it! If it does not make you, as a master, gentler and kinder to your servants. If it does not make you, as a servant, more respectful and more diligent. If it does not make you, as tradesmen, more scrupulous and more honest. If it does not make you, as a workman, less of an eye-servant. If it does not, in fact, make you more moral (that is the least thing to say of it)—if it does not make you more holy (that is the higher thing, by far), you may well question whether you know anything about the Grace of God in your soul at all!  
David did not say, “Well, I am washed. He has made me whiter than snow and He has created a new heart and a right spirit within me—and that is quite enough. As to my outward actions, what do they signify? We are not saved by works, you know, it is all of Grace.” Ah, but that is not the language of David or of any other legitimate child of God. It is this—“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” I have heard say that where they talk a great deal about good works you will not find them. But I hope among those of us who talk much about Grace, good works will always be found, for where good works do not follow upon faith, such faith as there seems to be is dead, indeed!  
God grant you, dear Friends, to take this as the resolution of every child of God—“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.”  
II. But now the text is interrupted. There is a break. There is a piece inlaid, as it were, of a different metal. It IS AN EJACULATION. “O, when will You come unto me?” Many inspired writers, without diverging from their train of thought, interline their purpose with a prayer. There is an old proverb that, “kneeling never spoils silk stockings.” Prayer, to the preacher, is like provender to the horse. It strengthens and cheers him to go forward. As the scribe halts to mend his pen, or the mower to wet his scythe without loss of time, but rather with more facility to do his work, so you expedite, instead of hinder your business by stopping in the middle of it to offer a word of prayer.  
So here it is written, “O, when will You come unto me?” And he means by that, “Lord, I want to be wise. Come and teach me! I want to behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Lord, come and sanctify me! I know not how to act till You instruct me. Open my lips that I may show forth Your praise. Guide my feet that I may run in Your commands. Keep my eyes that they look not upon sin. Hold back my hand from iniquity. When will You come unto me? I need the influence of Your Grace to guide me in Your ways. Lord, come and teach me.”  
Then he meant further, “Lord, come and assist me. If there is any holiness to which I have not yet attained, come, Holy Spirit, lift me up unto it. If there is any sin which I have not conquered, O, come, You conquering Spirit of holiness, and overcome the evil. When will You come unto me? I am feeble, I can do nothing, but when I have Your mighty aid I become strong and can perform all things. When will You come unto me?” It is a crying of his soul after Divine teaching, Divine direction, Divine assistance. Nor less, I believe, is it a yearning after Divine fellowship. You know, Beloved, we never walk aright unless we walk with God. As I have said that holiness is wisdom, so let me say that

 communion is the mother of holiness. We must see God if we are to be like God.  
And if from day to day we can be content without a word from the mouth of God, go to business without prayer, come home and go to our beds without seeking the face of our Father who is in Heaven—then, to walk wisely is impossible! The neglect of prayer is a fatal flaw in any life. Communion with God is so essential and the disregard of it is such a folly, that it is simply ridiculous for the negligent man to talk about behaving himself wisely in a perfect way. Godliness is the soul of life. Get near to God—that is the thing! If we walk with Him we walk in the light. But if we get away from Him we walk in the darkness. It cannot be otherwise—and he that walks in the darkness will stumble. He may not know why he stumbles, but stumble he will. Only he who walks in the light will be able to pick his steps and verify the blessed fact that, “If we walk in the light as God is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”  
And thus we are enabled to walk wisely in a perfect way when the light comes to us. “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O, when will You come unto me?” appears to me like an expression of holy awe, as if he said, “Lord, I had need behave myself aright, for You are coming. I am a steward. You are my Master and You are coming to say, ‘Give an account of your stewardship.’ I am a servant. I need mind what I am about and how I acquit myself, for my Master can see me and my Master is on the way to say to me, ‘What have you done with your talent? How have you laid it out?’ When will You come unto me? It makes me feel a trembling in my soul and brings the tears into my eyes when I think of having to go before my Lord to give Him my account. Such a stewardship as mine will not easily be accounted for.”  
I often envy George Fox, the Quaker, who, as he died, used these remarkable words, “I am clear, I am clear, I am clear!” Doubtless, he meant that he was “clear of the blood of all men.” Grand thing for a minister to be able to say! It will need all the Grace that God can give a man to be able to say that! Now I ask you, fathers of families, if you were called upon at once, without further notice, to give in your account, can you tell the Lord you are clear about your children? Mothers, can you say you are clear about your boys and girls as to the way you have brought them up— as to your efforts for their souls?  
Masters, mistresses, are you clear about your servants? Young men, young women, are you clear about those that you work with and in whose houses you live? If the Lord were to say to you, “Come, now, I have entrusted you with a talent, how have you used it?”—are there not some of you who would have to go and take up that napkin in which you have hidden away till it has grown rusty? “O, when will You come unto me?” seems to me a question full of solicitude. Lord, it may be You will come all of a sudden with surprise, for You have told me that in such an hour as I think not You will appear. Am I ready? Am I able to give a satisfactory account as to what I have done, as Your servant, in my general walk and conversation?  
Come, let me press these thoughts upon myself and then upon you! “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way,” and well I may, since Your eye is on me, O my God, and Your day is coming when I must be put into the balances! And if I am found wanting, terrible must be my doom, for other eyes than mine shall search my heart, and other scales than I am able to use shall give the final test—and settle once and for all my endless state. God grant you to order your lives by His Grace! You cannot do so without the power of the Holy Spirit. O, that whenever the Lord shall come you may meet Him with joy!  
III. Now to our third point. After a parenthesis of devotion, he returns with more intense earnestness to his resolution. IN A MOST PRACTICAL MANNER HE CONCENTRATES HIS AIM—“I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” With his house or household in view, for which he felt a deep responsibility and a yearning anxiety, he applies himself with a delicate consideration to the state of his own heart. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” A very wise thing. Elisha healed the springs when the currents ran foul. It is of no use attempting to cleanse the courses when the fountain is corrupt. The thing is to heal the springs. The heart needs putting right. When the heart is right, then all will be right.  
If anywhere we show our hearts, it is at home. There we wear our hearts upon our sleeves. Outside, in the world, it is not safe to show too much of our heart. There are some of us who always say everything that is uppermost. We cannot help it. We have not learned to be guarded yet, and we have had our knuckles rapped pretty dreadfully, sometimes, for our unguardedness. No doubt there are many men of a reserved disposition who go through the world more easily than those of a more openminded character. At home everybody should be open-hearted and transparent. Hence the necessity that if we are to walk aright at home, the matter should begin with the heart being sound.  
If any man were to say to you, “I mean to be a good husband, a good father”—if any woman shall say, “I mean to be a good mistress,” or, “a good servant,” that will not do unless you understand that the heart must, first of all, be altered. If the heart is right, other things will surely follow in their place. Now, the heart, if we are to walk rightly, must show itself in the house. “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” The heart must be perfect. And then we must show our heart in our actions. I think it is a miserable thing when a man does not open his heart in the sacred precincts of his own home. I can understand his restraining his feelings abroad, for he may be conscious that he is among rivals rather than friends—but when at home that restraint is unbecoming.  
You know the sort of man whose hospitality is repulsive. I have been to see him at his house. I dare say you are welcome, but you would not think you were by the sinister greeting you receive when he shakes hands with you! His hand drops into your hand just like a dead fish. You talk with him and he is perfectly indifferent. When he is most friendly there is not any freedom in his conversation. Well, now, see the way in which he treats his wife. No love. He is afraid of spoiling her. I recollect very well going to a house where I sat with the husband and I heard a gentle tap at the door. His Lordship said, “Come in.”  
Who should enter but his wife? What a delightful picture of obedience! Knocking at a husband’s door occurred to me as not the style of thing that most of us are accustomed to, or would like to see. I very soon perceived that she was the principal servant in the house. That was all he accounted her—and she had learned to form no higher estimate of herself. The man had not a heart. We talked about a son that was dead. Well, he seemed to regret that he was gone—he was a very good help to him in his business. That seemed to be the principal point about his deceased son— he was a great help to him in his business. No heart! No heart! No heart! No heart!  
But it is worse when you see a woman with no heart. And there are some. And if they are Christian people—well, I often wonder at the Lord’s choice of any of us—but I certainly wonder when He chooses any of that sort! They do not seem to be the stuff out of which you can make a Christian. No feeling—hard “Gradgrindy” sort of people. They seem to think that people are just so many machine wheels to grind round at a regular rate. And the strong-minded woman simply puts a little oil, now and then, occasionally, as a trade, to the machinery and administers it just in that style. No heart!  
Now David did not mean to go through the world in this fashion. O, a house is all the better for having a heart inside it! And a man is a man— and he is more like God when there is a heart inside his ribs. When he gets home the children feel that father has got a heart. And as they climb his knees and smother him with kisses, they delight to know that he has a warm heart! And when he greets his dear relatives, especially those that are part and parcel of himself, he has got a soul that goes beyond his own little self and is enlarged and inspires the whole of the family! O, give me heart, and that is what David meant when he said he would behave himself wisely. But when he was in his own house he would walk with a perfect heart. He would be hearty in everything he did and said.  
Well, now, having noticed those two things—that the heart must be right, and that the heart must be expressed—the next thing is that the conduct at home must be well regulated. “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” The Christian man at home should be scrupulous in all departments within his house. We may have different rooms there, but in whatever room we are, we should seek to walk before God with a perfect heart. Ah, dear Friends, there are many professors that fail in this! I am not disposed to pry into your homes. I do not want to undertake the task. It would be a sad thing if it were part of a minister’s duty to be peeping through your keyholes, seeing how you act. Still, we have reason to fear that some people who pass current as saints abroad behave themselves like devils at home!  
It used to be so and it is so, still, and you may depend upon it—the man is what he is at home. This is a simple but a crucial test of character. If a man does not make his family happy. If his example is not that of holiness in the domestic circle, he may make what pretension of godliness he likes, but his religion is base, worthless, mischievous. The sooner he gets rid of such a profession the better for himself, for then he may begin to know what he is and where he is, and seek the Lord in spirit and in truth. It is at

 home that the lack of true religion will do the most damage!  
If you are a hypocrite and go out into the world, you will soon be found out—and the people who observe you will not be much influenced by your example. They will come to the conclusion that you are what you are, and they will treat you as such, and that will be the end of it. But that will not be so with little Master Johnny, who sees his father’s actions. He is not able to criticize, but he has a wonderful faculty for imitation. And, Mother, it is not likely that little Polly will begin to say, “Mother is inconsistent.” No, she does not know that, but she will take it for granted that mother is right and her character will be fashioned upon your pattern—and you will be injuring her for life unless the Grace of God wonderfully prevents it.  
Why, at home, to our children, especially when they are young, we are, as it were, little gods! They take their law from us and their conduct is shaped according to the pattern we set before them. Round the hearth, if anywhere, holiness ought to be conspicuous, for there, holiness is most beautiful, most useful and most productive. It is a blessed thing for some of us that we can look back upon a father’s example and a mother’s example with nothing but unalloyed gratitude to God for both. But there are others among you, who, in looking back, must say, “I thank God I was delivered from the evil influence to which I was subjected as a child.” Do not let your child ever have to say that of you, dear Friend, but ask for Grace that in your own house you may walk with a perfect heart.  
Surely, dear Friends, if we are not living in our households as we ought to do, this, above all common faults and infirmities, is one of the most disparaging and condemnatory marks with which we can possibly be judged! In the world we may be under some pressure, but at home we are left free, for every man’s house is his castle and if, inside his own castle, he does not walk before God, then he stands condemned by the depravity of his temper and his habits! Outside, men are checked and kept within decent bounds by the example and the observation of their fellow men, so that they are not altogether what they seem—and they are partly regulated by what they wish to appear. Even when they are in Church they are under some restraint—they are constrained to show some deference to the place and the assembly. But at home they are altogether unshackled! They can think aloud, speak without premeditation, follow their own tastes and gratify their natural inclinations. There, therefore, if anywhere, the man is what he is!  
Now you need not tell me what kind of appearance you will put on next Sunday morning. You need not tell me that! I would rather ask you to judge yourself by your deportment on Saturday night. I do not particularly ask you how you feel on Thursday night at this particular hour. How will you be at half-past nine? And how will you be tomorrow morning? What will you be to your servants, to your employers, to your children, to your neighbors? If God, by His Infinite Grace and the power of His Holy Spirit, helps you to walk with a perfect heart at such times and in such places, then will you be an honor to the Church of God and you will have a blessing upon your own soul.  
Now, the things that I have talked of seem to be very homely, but, indeed, they are most important. I love to expound Christian doctrine! I love to open up the promises! This is all sweet work, but we must have the precepts. We shall never have a large increase to an unholy Church, or, if we do, that increase will be a curse instead of a blessing. I believe that the greatest power in the world, next to the ministry of the Word of God, is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the holy living of Christian families! Let us plant in this dark world garrisons of holy men and women with their children about them, and this will be a means whereby the world shall be conquered for Christ.  
Ah, I may be addressing some who have no part or lot in true religion. It is just possible that they are at the heads of households and yet they may have never considered this question about walking wisely. Permit me to suggest to you how necessary it is. I have known men who, though very ungodly themselves, have been shocked at the idea of their children growing up in worldliness and wretchedness. And I have, on the other hand, known persons converted late in life who never could forgive themselves when they looked upon their children who had grown up in sin. I remember very well a poor woman who had received good under my ministry and found the Savior. She earned her living by washing.  
When I went into the house to see her she hastily wiped her hands and, as she greeted me, the tears were in her eyes when she spoke about her conversion, but she wrung her hands in bitterness, for she said, “I was left with six little children when my husband died. As a lonely widow I worked hard for them. I never had any help from anybody, but I brought them up myself and now my son is this, and my daughter is that. But,” she said, “they are, everyone of them, unconverted—everyone of them! And after I was converted, myself, I found that I had lost the opportunity of influencing them. I never took my children to the House of God. My eldest boy, when I went to see him the other day, and asked him to go with me, said, ‘No, no. You never took us when we were little and you need never expect us to go now.’”  
That was the trouble that bowed her down with heaviness when she was relieved of the former obligations to find them daily bread. Oh, Fathers and Mothers, if you are not converted early, you will live to regret it if God does save you at all, that you saw your youngsters grow up till they got beyond your influence and they grew up unsaved! You young persons who are just commencing life, I do charge you—perhaps God has sent you here that I may ring these counsels and cautions in your ears! Do pause, think, consider, look—and may God give you Grace and sense enough to see that it needs wisdom to steer the boat through this voyage of life—and that wisdom only is to be had from Heaven!  
May you bend your knees at this very hour, and say, “Lord, give me Your Grace! Give me a renewed heart! Give me Christ to be my Savior and help me to behave myself rightly in a perfect way till You shall bring me to see You in Heaven in Your Glory.” God fulfill to you this petition, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—James 1*Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #2362 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE KING AND HIS COURT  
NO. 2362

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MAY 27, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1888.

**“My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” Psalm 101:6.**

DAVID is going to be king and these are the resolutions that he makes before he ascends the throne. He meant that he would look for the best men in the nation and that he would take care of them. He would give them offices about his court so that he might have his work done well — that his people might be judged by wise and righteous men—and all the affairs of state should be managed by those who were faithful to God. This was a very proper thing for him to do. I wish that those who are not kings, but who are placed in any position of influence, would have their eyes upon the faithful of the land. Good men should patronize good men. Those who have it in their power, should, to the utmost of their ability, advance those whom they know to be upright and true and gracious men. But, my dear Friends, we are not going to talk about David, now, but about the Son of David, “great David’s greater Son,” the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! There is no doubt that in His Kingdom His eyes are upon the faithful. He looks upon the faithful among His people. He takes them into communion with Himself and He uses them as His servants in conspicuous and remarkable ways—“My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me: he that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve Me.”

My business, tonight, is to speak especially to God’s people about this faithfulness. And I shall handle the subject thus. First, Who are these faithful men—“the faithful of the land”? Secondly, What will the King do with them? And, thirdly, How may we get among them, that we, also, may have this favor from the King of Kings?

I. First, then, WHO ARE THESE FAITHFUL MEN to whom Jesus, our King, will have respect at all times?  
I answer, they may be known in part by this mark—they are true in their dealings with God. A man who is not honest to God is honest to nobody. He who will rob his God will soon rob his fellow men. Now, I mean by being truthful and upright to God, just this, that we walk before Him in deep sincerity of heart. To make a profession of being what we are not, is not being among the faithful of the land! And to come before God with prayers which are not prayers, but only the skins and shells of prayers, is not being faithful before God. To profess to sing His praises, when we are only uttering words without heart, is to make ourselves as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal in the ears of God. We are not accepted by Him if our heart is not true. A man who is faithful before God will not go in his religious expressions beyond his religious experience—he will always be afraid of stretching his arm farther than his sleeve will reach. If he has not felt certain changes, he will not profess to have felt them. He would rather err on the side of doubting and distrusting himself than on the side of boasting and claiming for himself what he really does not possess. I think that it is a most important thing to be very true and thorough in our private walk with God. If you are backsliding, it is well to know it. If you are making but small progress, it is well to confess it. If you are an idler, it is well to admit it. If you have become lukewarm, it is well to know it. Nothing is more dangerous than to be saying to yourself, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” when all the while you are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

God has His eyes upon the faithful of the land, those who are faithful to Him, who do not attempt to deceive themselves with religious professions which they cannot support. How many a man has become a bankrupt by a lavish expenditure which exceeded his income! He said that he “must keep up appearances,” and he did keep up appearances till they became his ruin! God grant that you and I may never try to keep up appearances before Him! Be what you would seem to be and, in the Presence of God never seem to be or dream of seeming to be what you are not! Thus I think we, first of all, know the faithful by their upright dealing with God.  
This will lead them to be true in their dealings with men. I hope that I need not say much about this, but yet I do not know. I have heard, at times, of professing Christians who are no more straight in business than worldlings are. It is a shame to you of whom this can be said and it is a disgrace to the Church to which you belong! It brings dishonor upon the Lord Jesus Christ if any of you profess to be His servants and yet you lie and cheat, or, what is much the same thing, puff your goods beyond what can honestly and fairly be said of them, or sell them under false names, deceiving the people who purchase from you. I am not going into all the tricks of trade. I remember how good old Latimer, preaching, once, at Paul’s Cross, said that he knew a man who had some wheat, poor stuff it was, and he poured out a bushel of good wheat, first, and then he put the bad wheat next. And then he put some good wheat on the top and so mixed it all together, or, rather, he concealed the bad wheat in the middle. Latimer went on telling another tale, and another, until all of a sudden he said, “Now, I am not doing you any good, for, I daresay, some of you will go and do these things, yourselves, tomorrow.”  
So the good old man checked himself and dealt with the evil rather by way of generality than by specialty. That man is not faithful in God’s esteem who is not upright, honest, true to a hair’s breadth, in his dealings with his fellow men! We must stand to our bond even though we lose by it. We must be true to the word we speak though it be to our own hurt. God grant that His Spirit may work in us, not only the ordinary integrity which may be found in many a natural man, but something deeper and more thorough than that in all our dealings in business, in the family and everywhere else, for the eyes of the King are upon the faithful of the land!  
Now, dear Friends, such people will, in the next place, always be true in their dealings with men on God’s behalf. I think this passage bears very pertinently upon the minister, the Sunday school teacher and the Christian worker. The eyes of Christ are upon the faithful of the land. If I come here and teach you what I do not believe, or if I conceal what I do believe, or if I tell you something which has in it a suppression of the Truth of God, or if I preach to you orthodox doctrine while in my own heart I believe something different, remember that I cannot be said to be one of the faithful of the land! And if I, as a minister, sit still and watch the Gospel of Christ trampled in the mire and hold my tongue for fear of shame and contempt, I cannot be called one of the faithful of the land! If you, dear Sunday school teachers, in your instruction of the children, keep back from them anything they ought to know, or if, in telling them what they ought to know, you do not press it home upon their consciences. If you do not pray with them. If you do not long for their conversion, you are not faithful to their souls on God’s behalf and the eyes of Christ will not be fixed upon you with approval!  
It is a very hard thing, to always be faithful with men on God’s behalf. I know that it is so even in visiting the sick. One is tempted to begin to comfort some of them when they ought not to be comforted—to say very soft and gentle words to them because they are ill, when, perhaps, they have never felt their need of a Savior—and never been awakened to any sense of spiritual need. I remember one who was greatly condemned for the action that he thought it right to take. Two or three of us had been to see a sick and dying man who always welcomed visitors. We prayed with him and told him the Gospel, but we were all under the impression that we had produced no effect whatever upon his mind—that he was passing into another world without any knowledge of his lost estate—without any repentance or faith in Christ. The good man to whom I refer—he is now in Heaven, but I well remember the reproach that he suffered for what he did—he stood at the foot of the bed and he said, “Friend, you are a deceived man. You are dying and you have no well-grounded hope. You always say, ‘Yes, yes, yes,’ to all we say, but my inmost thought of you is that you are without God and without hope. And if you die as you are, you will be lost forever.”  
The man’s wife was thunderstruck and so was he! But when we went to visit him the next day, you should have seen the change that God had worked in him! There was a broken-hearted man crying for mercy! A man in sore trouble and distress of soul. The faithful messenger of God had told him the naked truth—it pained him to do it, but he had been more faithful to the sick man than others who had spoken very kindly to him! Oh, I believe if we are faithful, so that we are clear of the blood of all men, faithful to the Truth of God, faithful to our own consciences, faithful to the consciences of those with whom we have to deal, then we are among the number of whom the text says, “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me.”  
Have you and I been faithful to our own children and faithful to our own parents? Wives, have you been faithful to your own husbands about their souls? Do you not think that some of us might go home, tonight, and pour out floods of tears before God as we confess, “No, we have not been as faithful as we should have been to what we know of the Gospel, and to those to whom we were bound to teach it”? Christ has a special eye of love for those who are faithful in their dealings with God, faithful in their dealings with man and faithful in their dealings with the souls of men on God’s behalf. Oh, that we may be among that happy company!  
Then, observe that these faithful men are thorough in all that they do. If you read the second part of our text, you will see that the Psalmist also says, “He that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” May I be permitted to say, especially to you who are commencing the Christian life, that if you wish to live near to God and to be greatly used of Him, it is important that you should begin as you mean to go on—by endeavoring to walk in a perfect way? There are some who tried, at first, with their own convictions. I cannot help quoting myself, at the risk of being called egotistical. When I was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ and made to rejoice in Him, I read the New Testament for myself. I had no friend and no relative who was a baptized Believer. I come of a stock in which infant Baptism has long been religiously observed. I read the Scriptures and I saw, there, that only the Believer was to be baptized. That Truth of God came to my conscience, but the suggestion which came to me from friends was, “Well, it really is a pity to introduce this matter, for all those around you think differently.”  
I have never ceased to thank God that I was thoroughly honest to my convictions about the ordinance. Do any of you think it a trifle? Very well, waive that point for the moment, but when a man is not honest to his convictions about a trifle, the next thing is that he is not honest to his convictions about something else—and so he gets off the lines—and if you begin to go a little aside, for the sake of peace, or to prevent disturbances, or to please your friends, you have taken a way of life which will lead you, I cannot tell, where! Be determined that if others do as they please, you are not accountable for their action—but still do what you believe to be right! If you are a Christian, go through with it! Be a follower of Christ in every respect as far as the Word of God and your own conscience lead you. I found that the habit of beginning to think for myself and to follow my convictions was useful to me, and it has been useful to me to this day. And at this moment, before the living God, I am able to stand on my own feet, to lean neither on this man nor on that, but only on that eternal arm which will support any man and woman—every man and woman who, in the sight of God, determines to follow the Truth of God wherever it may lead them!  
Now, I earnestly pray every Christian person here, especially in the beginning of life, to look well to this matter, for the joy of your life, the peace of your life, the inward rest of your life will much depend, under God, upon your being faithful to your convictions in every point as God shall help you! The great King, Himself, seems to say, tonight, “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me: he that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve Me. He is the man whom I will pick for My servant. I will put him here, or I will place him there, where I am unable to station some others because they are not clear and straight in their conduct and because they are not to be depended upon for loyal obedience to their Lord and Master.”  
Thus have I tried to describe who the faithful men of the land are. May we all be numbered among them!  
II. But now, secondly, I want very briefly to answer this question, WHAT WILL THE KING DO WITH THEM? David says, “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,” and David’s son, the Lord Jesus Christ, says the same. What does He mean?  
Well, first, His eyes of search will seek them out. That dear Brother who is faithful to God is only a young apprentice, but he has been faithful in not breaking the Sabbath. Nobody knows about him, dear young man, but the eyes of the Lord are upon him! There is a working man who, the other day, in the midst of a swearing company, rebuked the blasphemer and spoke up for Christ. That noble action is not recorded in the newspaper and never will be—but God’s eyes are upon the faithful of the land. There is a poor woman who, the other day, lost a good deal by being straight and honest. No one will report it. Nobody will put her down in the Legion of Honor. No, but God’s eyes are upon the faithful of the land! And when you, through the Grace of God, are led to follow Christ faithfully, quite alone, not wishing to be seen, doing in secret what only God, Himself, knows—it is reward enough for you that the Lord Jesus Christ sees what you do and He, Himself, will one day reward you openly.

But there is more than that. When King David says, “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,” it means that his eyes of favor will cheer them. The King would first search them out and then he would bring them forward. He would promote their interests, he would see that the faithful men were not thrust into a corner and neglected, he would have an eye to cheering them as they had an eye to pleasing him. I believe that God greatly favors and blesses those whom, by His Grace, He makes to be faithful. If you are unfaithful, your unfaithfulness will come home to you, sometime or another. I mean, if you are a child of God, for there is discipline in the House of the Lord. I am not talking, now, about the punishments of the Law of God—the children of God are not under the Law— I am speaking about the discipline of the Gospel. You are saved by free, rich, Sovereign Grace and you are made a child of God. From the moment of your new birth you come under the discipline of the great Father’s House and if you are unfaithful, your unfaithfulness will deprive you of many a comfort and many a joy! It will dog your footsteps and track you when you least expect it. Look at David. After his great sin, he was never the man that he had been before—and many were the griefs and pangs of heart which he brought upon himself by that one terrible fall. The Lord grant that we may be kept faithful, so that God’s eyes of approval may rest upon us and that we may joy and rejoice in Him from day to day!  
But then the text, after saying, “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,” adds, “that they may dwell with Me.” The faithful shall dwell with God. Oh, this is a choice privilege! When Grace makes a man faithful, God rewards his faithfulness by permitting him to dwell in close communion with his Lord! It is a wonderful thing to me that if we have any good works, God always works them in us, and then he rewards us for them as if they were our own! He gives us Grace and then smiles on us because of the Grace that He, Himself, gives! So, if He makes a man faithful, He then rewards him for it according to His Grace, and says, “He shall dwell with Me.”  
I think I see David carrying out this resolution. There is a poor but honest man away down there in Bethlehem and David hears of his strict integrity and sends him a letter. “Come to Jerusalem,” says the king, “I will make a courtier of you. I will make a friend of you. You are the sort of man I need. Come and dwell with me.” He hears of another poor man, over yonder, who has been ridiculed because he stood up for Jehovah, the God of Israel, when others were inclined to worship some false god. “Come up to Jerusalem,” he says, “come live with me. You are my sort of company, for you are one of the faithful ones.” Now, that is what the Lord Jesus Christ says to us! He calls us as sinners, but He communes with us as saints! He washes us when we are guilty, but after we are washed and He has made us upright in His sight, then He takes us to dwell with Him! He delights in opening His heart to us and in permitting us to open our heart to Him!  
Now, if any of you are not faithful to Christ, I can tell you that you will not be able to commune with Him. If you have done a wrong thing in business, or if you have held your tongue and not been faithful in testifying for Christ. When you go on your knees at night you will not be able to find yourself so led out in prayer as you were, before, when you were true to Him. And when you turn to the Scriptures, instead of finding them speaking to you, they will seem as if they were dumb—no voice of comfort will come from them. But if you have been faithful and true, and out and out for Christ, then you shall dwell with Him—you shall abide in Him and His Word will abide in you!  
Then it is added, “He shall serve Me.” The faithful shall be Christ’s servants. I do not know which is the greater privilege, “He shall dwell with Me,” or, “He shall serve Me.” Perhaps the second is the higher. Have you ever thought, Beloved Friend, what an honor it is to be permitted to do anything for God? For God to bless us is great condescension on His part, but for Him to permit us to be of any use to Him—this is a wonderful honor from His right hand! I believe that there is more honor in being allowed, for the Glory of God, to teach a little Sunday school child the way of salvation than there would be in ruling the whole German Empire if it were done for the glorification of self! The honor does not lie in the act so much as in the motive—and if the motive is, “I did it unto the Lord,” then I stand in the same rank with angels, yes, in a line with those wonderful living creatures that John saw in the Revelation who reveal the Glory of God and continually do Him service!  
The Lord will not have you as His servant if you are not faithful, if you do not give yourself up to His Truth and to be true, through and through! It is not God’s way to send forth His Truth by untruthful men. If there is a lie in your left hand, the Truth of God in your right hand will seem to have lost at least half its power. Like the hoard of Achan hidden away in the tent which robbed all Israel of the victory at the gates of Ai, so will you find that anything which is untrue, hidden away in your life or your conduct, will deprive you of victory when you go out in the service of God. “He shall serve Me,” says Christ. And He will not accept the service of those who are not true to Him.  
III. Thus I have spoken of a very necessary practical Truth of God, and I am going to close by trying to answer one more question—HOW MAY WE GET AMONG THESE FAITHFUL ONES?  
Perhaps we can truly say, God helping us, we hope that we are among them. If so, as we read a little while ago, “it is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves.” If there is any faithfulness, if there is any uprightness, unto God be the glory of it all! Pray, dear Brothers and Sisters, that you may never lose your faithfulness, but that you may be kept even unto the end! Remember that passage in Jude’s Epistle, “Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling”? So it is in the Revised Version and it is an improvement and nearer to the original than our old text, for while it is a great mercy to be kept from falling, it is a still greater favor to be guarded from stumbling, so as to walk with careful, steady progress in uprightness before God all your life! Let it be your constant prayer that you may be thus kept faithful even unto death.  
But now I speak to others who are not as yet faithful. You say, “How are we to get among the faithful?” Well, I should say, first, so far as you may be, and so far as your light goes, be faithful tonight—be honest in confessing sin. Before you sleep, put yourself before God just as you are. Have you neglected religion? Confess it. Or have you pretended to possess religion when there was no truth in your profession? Confess it. What has been your sin? Confess it. Kneel by your bedside and there, God, alone, seeing you, unveil your heart before Him. You say that He knows all about you. That is true and that is a reason why you should be the more explicit in your confession to Him. Speak freely to God and make Him, as you ought to make Him, your only “Father Confessor.” Tell Him that you are lost. Tell Him that you are hard-hearted. Tell Him that you are unfeeling. Tell Him that you desire to be converted, but that it is only a faint desire as yet. Tell him all about yourself. In a word, begin to deal with God on the straight. If you have not done so, already, I pray God that you may do so, tonight, and I beseech you to go as far as you can in this matter. Reveal your poverty, your filthiness, your sin, your nakedness, your deserving of Hell—only do all honestly as in the sight of God. What an amazing thing it is that men do not like to act thus, yet, when the Grace of God enables them to do it, they are already on the road to salvation! When the man comes before God with a rope round his neck, confessing that he deserves to die, then there is this blessed text to comfort him—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” God grant that you may find it to be so tonight!  
Well, then, dear Friend, next, be anxious to have a new heart and a right spirit. May God make you thus anxious to-night! Remember that there is evil in us by nature. “All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.” “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” And before we can be faithful, we must be born again. No man will ever be true until the God of Truth has truly renewed him. Our tendency is to lean either this way or that—to stand upright is a gift of Divine Grace and none but the Holy Spirit can bestow it upon us! Oh, that we might have a deep anxiety to undergo that wondrous change, that radical and total change of heart which the Savior described when He said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again”! Go to the Lord with David’s prayer, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Plead that Old Testament promise, “A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”  
Then, supposing that you have come thus far, I earnestly entreat you, if you would be found among the faithful of the land, be sincere in all your dealings with the living God. If you mean to pray, pray! If you believe in Jesus, do not simply say that you believe, but believe! If you repent, do not merely talk of repentance, but repent! Let everything be thorough and downright. May the Spirit of God save you from getting the imitation of spirituality which will damn you! And may He give you the reality of spiritual life which will effectually save you! I believe that there are many who are very much injured by being led to profess religion when they do not possess it. There is a revival meeting. There is a room for converts— they get in there—they are pressed, they are exhorted, they are entreated! They think that they are sincere—in a certain measure they are—but there is no sense of guilt, no loathing of sin, no true repentance, no wounding and, therefore, no healing, no stripping and, therefore, no clothing! The whole thing is but a mere sham! And they go away and are, themselves, deceived and afterwards return to their old sins and are worse than they were before! If you have not eternal life, do not

 pretend that you have it. I charge you before God, who shall judge the quick and the dead, in the day of His appearing, never cheat yourself in this matter, for you are the only person that you can really cheat for long! God, Himself, you will never deceive. Make clear, clean, sharp, distinct, decided work of this matter, or rather, may God the Holy Spirit work this miracle of mercy in you, for Christ’s name’s sake!  
Lastly, dear Friend, if you would be among the faithful of the land, depend continually upon the Lord Jesus and His Word to make and keep you faithful. Every day wait upon Him for fresh anointing and renewed power. And daily live unto Him and for Him, laying yourself out to honor Him who has redeemed you. Your only hope is in His precious blood! Then let the objective of your existence be to glorify Him, alone. If this is so, you shall be among the faithful of the land and you shall dwell with the King, even with the King of Kings, and you shall serve Him forever and ever!  
Are you not glad to hear this, you great sinners? Jesus is as able to pardon you, now, as He was to save the dying thief! And you who have hard hearts, He is able to give you new ones, today, as He gave them to those of old. And oh, you children of God, I pray you, do not act as if David had a great God, and you have a little God! Do not act as if, in the trials of the olden times, God made bare His arm, but that now He will hardly put out His little finger! Do not treat Him as if it could be so. God still hears prayer! If He does not work miracles, He does the same thing in some other way which is even better! He still delivers us! He still feeds us! He still leads us! He still guards us! He is the same as He always was! Oh if you would but trust Him! Abraham’s God is your God and He can help you in the day of battle. Joshua’s God is your God and He says to you as He did to Joshua, “I will not fail you, nor forsake you.” Oh, believe it! Jesus Christ—my grandfather’s Jesus Christ, my father’s Jesus Christ—is my Jesus Christ! Look back on all the godly people you have ever known and think of what the Lord did for them—and then remember that His arm is not shortened, His ear is not heavy, His love is not diminished, His wisdom is not turned to foolishness! He is still able and willing to bless you, as in all the ages that have gone by. Trust Him, you saints! Trust Him, you sinners—and the Lord bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 100; 101.**

May the Spirit of God, by whose Inspiration David penned these Psalms, bless them to us as we read them!  
Psalm 100. This is entitled “a Psalm of Praise.” Note, here, that this is the only Psalm which bears that title. There are others which have titles very much like it, but this one is singled out from all the rest to be, in a very special sense, “a Psalm of Praise.” Martin Luther was very fond of it and it has even been said that he composed the tune which we have just sung, and which is commonly called, “the Old Hundredth”—though other attribute it to a German named Franc.  
Verse 1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all you lands. Do you notice the missionary spirit here? The Jews looked upon God as the God of Israel and they had but very faint desires for the conversion of other nations. But the Holy Spirit speaks more by David than David, himself, may have known—“Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all you lands.” We ought to express the praise of God, not merely to feel it, and to express it by what is called, here, “a joyful noise.” All our songs to God should have in them a measure of joyfulness. The gods of the heathen were worshipped with dolorous noises, with sorrowful sounds and cries of misery—but the God of Heaven is to be worshipped with a joyful noise! “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all you lands.” Oh, that the day were come when China, India and all Asia, Africa, America and Europe would take up the gladsome note of praise to Jehovah!  
2. Serve the LORD with gladness. What a text that is! “Serve the Lord.” Obey Him, yield to Him your homage, but serve Him, “with gladness.” He wants not slaves to Grace His Throne! He loves willing worship, happy worship, for He is “the happy God.” “Serve the Lord with gladness.”  
2. Come before His Presence with singing. Singing is delightful, but singing in God’s Presence is heavenly! Do not the spirits that are made pure and holy come before His Presence and come before it with singing? I wish that whenever we sing, we would sing as in the Presence of God. I am afraid that we sometimes go through the tune mechanically and the words languish on our lips. “Come before His Presence with singing.”  
3. Know you that the LORD, He is God. One says, “Man, know yourself,” and another says, “The proper study of mankind is man.” Not so! Man, know your God! The proper study of mankind is God! He who knows God knows himself, that is, he knows himself to be nothing. “Know you that Jehovah, He is God.” There is but one God—it is the same God in the Old Testament as in the New—Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!  
3. It is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves. Note the negative, as if to deny that we had any hand in our own making, and this is also worthy of notice spiritually. It is the Lord who has made us Christians, not we, ourselves. He has created us in Christ Jesus. There are some who lay such stress upon the human will and I know not what, besides, in man, that it is necessary to put in the negative as well as the positive. “It is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves.”  
3. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Praise Him, then! Praise Him because He is your Maker! Praise Him more sweetly because He is your Shepherd. If we are His people, here is His electing love, here is His effectual calling, here is the Grace of His Spirit that made us so. “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” He leads us, He feeds us, He protects us, He has bought us with His precious blood. Truly, this is good reason why we should make a joyful noise unto God and serve Him with gladness! “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Are you His people? O my dear Hearer, ask yourself—are you one of the sheep of His pasture?  
4. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. Gratitude is that oil which makes the wheels of life easily revolve. And if anybody ought to be grateful, surely we are the men and women for whom the Lord has done so much! “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.”  
5. For the LORD is good. Should we not praise so good a God?  
5. His mercy is everlasting; and His Truth endures to all generations. “His Truth”—that is to say, His truthfulness, His faithfulness to His people. This is a blessed Psalm and it seems to me to reach the highest point of praise when it tells us, “The Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His Truth endures to all generations.”  
Psalm 101. The last Psalm was a Hymn of Thanksgiving, this one is a Psalm of Thanksgiving. I suppose it to have been written by David just when he assumed the throne, when he was about to become king over all Israel and Judah. Its title is, “A Psalm of David.” This is what he said to himself—  
Verse 1. I will sing—That is right, David. In the 100th Psalm, he had exhorted other people to sing. Now, in the 101st he declares what he, himself, will do. “I will sing”—  
1. Of mercy and judgement. It is a mingled theme. There are the treble and the bass notes—“mercy and judgment.” There are some dear friends who, if they sing at all, will have to sing this way, for they have a heavy sorrow on their heart and yet great mercy is mixed with it. Oh, you who are troubled and bow your head in grief, say, “I will sing of mercy and judgment.” Mix the two together!  
1. Unto You, O LORD, will I sing. A second time the Psalmist says, “I will sing.” It is well to make this firm resolve. “Unto You, O Lord, will I sing.” Winter or summer, “I will sing.” Poverty or riches, “I will sing.” Sickness or health, “I will sing.” Life or death, “I will sing”—

*“I will love You in life, I will love You in death And praise You as long as You lend me breath.”*

“I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto you, O Lord, will I sing.” 2. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. This was a good resolve, but David did not carry it out to the fullest. There were evil times when he was not wise and there were sad times when he was far from perfect. Still, it is well to make such a resolve as this declaration of David when he came to the throne, especially when you are newly married, or just opening a business. Oh, that every young man and young woman would commence life with such a holy resolution as this—“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” But notice the prayer that follows the resolve—

2. O when will You come unto me? For I shall be neither wise nor holy without You. “O when will You come unto me?”  
2. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. There is a great deal in the way in which a man walks in his house. It will not do to be a saint abroad and a devil at home! There are some of that kind. They are wonderfully sweet at a Prayer Meeting, but they are dreadfully sour to their wives and children. This will never do! Every genuine Believer should say, and mean it, “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” It is in the home that we get the truest proof of godliness. “What sort of a man is he?” said one to George Whitefield, and Whitefield answered, “I cannot say, for I never lived with him.” That is the way to test a man—to live with him.  
3. I will set no wicked thing before my eyes. “I will not look at it, for if I do, I may long for it.” It is the tendency of things that are gazed at to get through the eyes into the mind and the heart. Therefore is it wise to say with the Psalmist, “I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.”

3. I hate the work of them that turn aside. He means all those who practice dodges—the “policy” people—those who never go straight. Kings usually like such people as these. Do not men say that an ambassador is a gentleman who is paid to live abroad and to lie for the benefit of his country? I suppose that is what diplomats in David’s day generally did, but David resolved that he would have none of that sort of folk about him. “I hate the work of them that turn aside.”  
3. It shall not cleave to me. “If I touch it, by His Grace, I will not let it stick to me. Pitch defiles, so I will keep clear of it and if any man tries to practice a trick for my advantage, I will have nothing to do with him.”

4. A forward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. “For, if I come to know him, one of these days I may be known, myself, to be a wicked person.” “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” No man or woman can afford to be the friend of a man who is not a friend of God! If he does not love God, quit his company, for he will do you no good. Say with David, “I will not know a wicked person.”

5. Whoever privately slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off. David was a king and he meant to study the peace of his people by putting down slander. Oh, what mischief is worked by backbiting tittle tattle! If we could have a race of men—and for the matter of that, of women, too— with no tongues, it might be an advantage, for there are some who use their tongues for very sorry purposes. David says, “Whoever privately slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off.”

5. Him that has an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. High looks and proud hearts are generally the characteristics of cruel, tyrannical, domineering persons—and King David would not have any such near him.

6. My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. Oh, that masters had more of an eye to the piety of their servants than they often have! They want “clever fellows.” Whether they are honest or not is generally a secondary question. So long as they are profitable to their masters, they will not mind what they are to their customers. But David would not have servants of that sort.

6, 7. He that walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that works deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that tells lies shall not tarry in my sight. He was a king and he could choose his company—and he meant to select the truthful and upright. Now mark this! If David would not let a man who lies tarry in his sight, you must not expect that God will let such tarry in His sight. “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone,” says the Scripture. God grant us to have clean, truthful tongues!

8. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD. What a practical Psalm this is! I have heard of a prince of Saxe-Gotha, years ago, who, whenever he thought that one of his ministers or judges was not what he ought to be, used always to send him the 101st Psalm to read. It was commonly said of such a man, “He will get the 101st Psalm before long.” And, after read

ing it, if he did not mend his manners, the prince sent him his dismission and he had to go about his business. Oh, that all who profess and call themselves Christians would act according to the tenor of this straight Psalm which is like a line drawn by the hand of God, without a crook or a turn in it!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—100 (VERSION II), 15, 123. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #2576 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ZION’S PROSPERITY  
NO. 2576

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 26, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1856.

**“You shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, is come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.”  
Psalm 102:13, 14.**

A selfish man in trouble is exceedingly hard to comfort because the source of his joy lies entirely within himself and when he is sad, all his springs are dry. But a large-hearted man, a man of benevolence and Christian philanthropy, has other springs from which to supply himself with comfort beside those which are found within himself. He can go to his God, first of all, and there seek abundant help. And we who try to comfort him can use other arguments not relating to himself, but to the world at large, to his country and, above all, to the Church of Christ. The writer of this Psalm seems to have been exceedingly sorrowful. He says, “I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.” And, finding there was no solace in his own circumstances, the only way in which he could comfort himself was to believe that God would arise and have mercy upon Zion. Though he was sad, yet Zion should prosper. However low was his own estate, yet Zion should arise. Christian you can always comfort yourself in God’s gracious dealings toward the church at large, but, if the church of which you are a member is in a sad and sickly condition, where shall you comfort yourself? Surely, then, you will be compelled to say with the Psalmist, “I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping because of Your indignation and Your wrath, for You have lifted me up, and cast me down.”

We shall notice four things. The nature, necessity, means and signs of church prosperity.  
I. THE NATURE OF THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Here I shall differ from many, for I think that many churches that are called prosperous are far from being so, while some churches, which are despised, are the most prosperous in God’s estimation.  
We do not conceive it to be, necessarily, a sign of a church’s prosperity when the congregation is large. We love to see people throng to hear God’s Word and to hear assembled multitudes shout aloud the praises of Jehovah. But when we witness these things, we do not take it for granted that the church is prosperous. Concerning some places, we would pray God to empty every seat, for there is in them a going away to Rome, or a wandering from the fundamental principles of God’s Word. The building may be full—crammed to its very doors—but there may be a desolating blight inside. There may be more prosperity in a place where but six of Christ’s true people meet together than where thousands congregate to worship God in a way which they think to be right, but which is not in accordance with His sacred Word.  
Nor do we conceive that the riches of the people make a church prosperous. Ask some member of a certain aristocratic community, “Is your church prospering?” “Yes,” he says, “there were 19 carriages waiting outside the other Sunday.” Ask another the same question and he will say, “Yes, So-and-So, who is worth so many thousands, has joined the church.” We say that a rich man’s soul is as precious as a poor man’s, but, at the same time, could anyone bring to us all the gold mines of Peru, the church would not, thereby, prosper! There are many churches which are rich in wealth, but exceedingly poor in faith, which might well barter all of their riches for the humble piety of the Methodist, or the earnest zeal of the ancient Puritan.  
Nor do we think that a church is necessarily prosperous because the minister is exceedingly eloquent. The tendency of the present day is toward what is called “intellectual preaching.” I never could see any intellect in it. I have heard literary men preach and I could only say of them what Locke said, “If a man cannot make you understand what he means, very likely it is because there is no meaning in it.” If you cannot understand him at once, just leave him alone, for he probably does not understand himself. We hold it to be a wrong thing that intellectual Rationalism should disgrace our churches—God’s pulpit was meant for God’s Gospel! We have theaters and public halls in which men may teach philosophy if they wish to do so. Take Christianity out of our pulpits and what have we done? The pulpit is the main bastion of the Church of Christ—the Thermopylae of Christendom. Here the great Truths of the Bible must be taught and he that uses not his pulpit to preach the Gospel has disgraced it, even though his talents are almost superhuman! He has disgraced God’s Church in not unceasingly proclaiming the Evangelical principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!  
Then, my Friends, you may ask me how I can tell whether the Church is prospering? I answer—I must consider for what purposes the Church was formed. And if it is not accomplishing that particular objective, it is not prospering. The Church is established for two objectives. First, for bringing God’s wandering sheep back to the fold of Christ. And, secondly, for fostering those sheep that are brought within the fold.  
We enter a place where we hear Divine Truth proclaimed. We enquire, “How many have been added to the church this year?” “No addition, no progress.” We enquire again another year—the same reply is received, “No sinners saved, none brought into the fold.” We are very deferential towards all ministers of the Everlasting Gospel—we would sooner receive a bad one as our friend than reject a good one. But we will not flatter our Brother, we will not mind about his congregation—if he does not win souls to Christ, his church is not prospering! If the pool of Baptism has never been opened to receive a convert, if the church doors have never turned upon their hinges to receive souls seeking salvation, if no fresh members are received to sit down at the Table of the Lord, if God’s elect have not been brought in, we have strong suspicions whether that man is a minister of God—we are certain that he is not a successful one! That church is in a sad, sad condition, which never hears the cry of newborn souls in its midst. God forbid we should preach for even a month or a week without winning souls! We think it would be worse than death to live a year and not hear of hundreds brought to Christ. It is true prosperity when the Lord’s children are gathered out from among the ungodly, when God is pleased, by the agency of His Word, to break hard hearts, to bend stubborn wills and to bring the mourners in Zion to rejoice in the love of the Savior. Is

 your church thus increasing? Then it is truly prospering.  
We also said there is another reason for the establishment of the Church of Christ, that is, for its own edification. It is a happy church in which the sheep of Christ are fed. Beloved, if God’s people are not fed, we do not think the church is prospering. Some have laughed at the term, “fed.” We have heard people say, “What do they mean by being fed?” Ah, children know the meaning of that word, and our hearers know what is meant by it. They do not care about our garnishing for the platter on which we serve the food, or the manner in which we carve it—we may cut it with a blunt knife, yet the child of God loves it! But if there is no food for the saints, if the members do not grow in Grace, if they are not irreproachable in their conduct, if they have not the spirit of Christ, if they do not enjoy fellowship with Jesus, if they have not attained to the knowledge of the love of God in Christ, if they have not entered into the rest of faith, if they do not live near Jesus and endeavor as much as in them lies to imitate Him—we say the church is not prospering! It may be the wealthiest under Heaven, but it may also be the most impoverished. It may be the most learned, according to human views, but the most heretical, the farthest from prosperity and the nearest to blasphemy!  
Let us look at our churches as they ought to be viewed. Are souls saved? Are saints edified and built up? This is the only thing I ask myself. Some say this, some that, and some the other about our church—we care not in the least about the ten thousand opinions people form of us! We only say sinners are saved and we will keep on preaching as long as this is the case. And if we can find men, women and children declaring that they are spiritually fed, we feel that our mission is successful! Is it so in your church? Then you have the elements of a prosperous one.  
II. We shall now consider THE NECESSITY FOR THE PROSPERITY OF OUR CHURCHES.  
What matters that to some? They come regularly to chapel and occupy their pews. But they never ask themselves the question, “Does our church prosper?” Oh, no—that is the minister’s business! The Deacons must look after that matter. Our friend comes to chapel Sunday after Sunday, like a very religious man. He does not go to sleep, that I have upon good evidence! Sometimes the sermon should stir him up, yet it does not. He approves of the idea of everybody minding his own business and, while carrying out the old maxim, “Charity begins at home,” he allows it to end there. Now and then, he prays for the minister, if called upon at the Prayer Meeting, but he does not regard the minister as his Brother, so he does not pray for him at the family altar. He hears that missions are succeeding abroad, but, for all he cares, the mission stations might be closed. He would like the church to prosper, but he would not put himself out of his way even to secure that result and, as to giving up himself, like Curtius of old, and leaping into the gulf to serve the church—oh, no—he would never commit so rash an act! He would not endanger his own life, lest the church should be damaged by losing so good a man!  
But I trust that some of you have a regard for the church’s prosperity. If not, you ought to have. Let me remind you why. Even selfish as we may be, we ought to care for the success of the church, first, for our own sakes. If we do not, by Divine Grace, live and labor for our fellowcreatures, their decline will have a deleterious influence upon our own piety. The coldness of the church of which I am a member tends to chill me. The lukewarmness of my fellow Christians has a tendency to pull me down. But if I belong to a church which is rich in Grace, the tendency will be to fill my mouth with marrow and fatness—and to make me rejoice in the ways of the Lord!  
Your families, too, are deeply interested in the prosperity of the church. I know that many sons and daughters do not attend the chapels where their parents go—their parents do not ask them to do so—they would not like them to go there. “It does very well for us,” they say, “but it would not suit them.” Then, there must be something amiss there! What is good for the parent is good for the child, and what is good for the child is good for the parent. I like what Robert Hall once said when he had been preaching a doctrine which he was told was suitable for old women—“If it is so,” he replied, “then it is suitable for everybody, and I shall preach that doctrine again.” Now, if you love your families and would see them brought into Christ’s Church, you must labor with God in prayer for them and ask that He would be pleased to have mercy upon Zion, that her set time may come, that her servants may take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof.  
Also, for the sake of the neighborhood in which you live, labor for God, seeking His blessing, that your church may prosper. Wherever a minister’s voice is raised in the cause of his Master, all around there ought to be a green spot, as in the desert, where water is to be found, there is an oasis where the traveler can rest, so, where a House for God is built, there ought to be a green spot where the efforts of the tract-distributor and the Sunday school teacher should tend to keep the soil fertile.  
Again, for the sake of our nation, seek the prosperity of Zion. If we are to be a prosperous nation, we shall not accomplish that result by our commerce, or by the force of arms, but by our Christianity! As long as ever Christ’s Church remains faithful in this land, old England shall stand in the front of the nations. England has been the cradle of the Gospel and, therefore, has she flourished. And, rest assured that as the true faith grows strong, England shall be mighty. The flag of old England is nailed to the mast, not by our sailors, but by our God! England is safe as long as she keeps fast by the true Protestant principles of the Everlasting Gospel. Her ministers need never fear for her, for firm as the eternal hills, strong as the mighty mountains shall this, our happy land, forever rest while she is true to Christ! God grant that the Church may prosper for old England’s sake!  
But, most of all, we want to see the Church prosper for Christ’s sake. He is everything to us! Compared with Christ, our nationality is less than nothing and vanity. But, oh, when we think of all our Savior did and suffered for us here below, surely we can desire nothing less than for Him to see of the travail of His soul and to be abundantly satisfied. When you bend your knees in prayer to God to bless His Church, think that you hear Christ groaning in Gethsemane, that you see Him in agony in the garden. Think of Him when the thorns were placed on His head. Think of the shame, the spitting, the plucking off the hair that He endured. Yes, when you pray for the Church, think, then, that you behold the Lamb of God expiring on the Cross. Think that you hear Him cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani”—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” When you think of these things, surely you will say, “Did Jesus suffer thus to win a crown, and shall I not pray that that crown may rest on His head? Did Jesus thus die that His children might be ransomed and His elect saved, and shall I not pray that He may realize that desire?”  
For your Master’s sake—for your Lord’s sake—for His blood and agonies’ sake, I beseech you, pray always for Zion, “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” “They shall prosper that love her.”  
III. We notice, next, THE ONLY MEANS OF REVIVAL IN GOD’S CHURCH.  
What is it? We may hear of some great evangelist going through the land—surely he will revive the churches! We will hold a convocation of the clergy and they shall devise means of reviving the churches! Not so, thinks the Psalmist—he says, “You shall arise,” as if God had nothing to do but to arise and then His Church would arise, too! For, when God arises, Zion begins to prosper! How easy are the methods by which God accomplishes His great works! No doubt, if we had had to devise means for lighting up this earth, when the darkness of the evening first came upon it, we would have recommended some fifty thousand great lights hung about in various parts of the world. But look at God’s wondrous means of lighting the globe—the sun rises, the light shines and all is done! So is it with God’s plan of reviving His Church. We devise this plan and the other, but God only arises and has mercy upon Zion—and “the time to favor her, yes, the set time is come.”  
Let us learn this lesson—if our church is to be made to prosper, God must do it! If we are to grow up in Christ and see great revival in these latter days, God must do it! Can the minister revive the Church? Can the people revive it? Certainly not! God alone can accomplish that great work. He must arise and have mercy upon Zion. There are means which He puts into the hands of His people and wishes them to use, but still, the ultimate reason of a church’s growth is that God arises and has mercy upon her! If the prosperity of a church consists in the salvation of sinners, must not God arise to save? If the building up of God’s elect is another part of spiritual prosperity, must not God arise to build up His people in their faith, for, “except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it”? You may bring me a man filled with the Holy Spirit, possessing the zeal of Peter, or the eloquence of Paul, but no prosperity will there be in God’s Church unless God Himself bestows the heavenly shower and sends salvation down! What our churches need, just now, is not simply men of God, but we need more of God’s own Presence and Power in our midst!  
We think we have our God among us, but I fear we have not so much of His Presence as our forefathers used to have. I am inclined to look back with holy envy upon the olden times—the days of George Whitefield, or of Rowland Hi1l—there was then a larger influx into the Church than there is now and a more visible manifestation of God’s Holy Spirit. We are multiplying our places of worship and doing very much towards evangelizing the world, but we have not the shout of a King in our midst as we used to have! We have our soldiers clad in steel—their arms bright and glittering, their swords of the best metal—but the great lack is we have not the King’s Presence as we once had. I am sure, having passed through many churches, there is a sad lack of the influences of the Holy Spirit. There is a lack of vital godliness and earnest piety. There is some supplication, but not that prevailing prayer which thunders in the ears of God and brings copious blessings from on high. Where are the Elijahs who can stop up the bottles of Heaven? Where are there on the earth those who can face a multitude and prophesy to the dry bones, knowing that when they speak, souls shall be saved?

Go into many Prayer Meetings in London—I hope it is not so generally throughout the country—the minister is obliged to say that he has not enough people present to ring the changes and he, himself, has to pray twice to fill up the time. By all his preaching he cannot get the people to pray! Shame upon such a church! This state of things proves that God is not in our midst as He was formerly. When God shall arise, His Church shall arise in earnest, fervent prayer, for the time to favor Zion, yes, the set time will then have come!  
IV. Now, Beloved, let us consider the fourth point—THE SIGNS THAT GOD’S CHURCH IS BEING BLESSED. “For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.”  
What are the “stones” of Zion? The Church of God is built of living stones—that is, the children of God. And it is a good sign when God’s servants take pleasure in one another and “favor the dust”—that is, not the ministers, nor the deacons, but the poor members. In these degenerate times, we do not take so much pleasure in each other as we ought. There is little Christian sociability, but it is a happy sign when the members meet in a cordial spirit and begin to talk of what the Savior did and suffered here below, and of Jesus’ charming name which has a sweeter sound than the most melodious music! It is profitable, indeed, when Christians begin to speak often, one to another, and God Himself turns eaves-dropper to His children. He listens and hears, and a Book of Remembrance is written—the Lord, Himself, becomes a reporter and records the conversation of them that fear Him and that think upon His name! We shall be sure the church is prospering when all the members love each other and the poorer ones are not overlooked!  
There are some chapels where a Christian Brother and Sister are divided by that rail in the center—they have sat there for years—yet they do not know each other’s names! They did show each other the hymn one day, when one came late, but they have never shaken hands. They are members of the same church and one of them may be poor and starving—but the other knows nothing about it because he does not, “favor the dust thereof.” But, when God arises, and has mercy upon Zion, His people say—  
*“Have You a lamb in all Your flock  
I would refuse to feed?  
Have You a foe, before whose face  
I fear Your cause to plead?”*  
It is a good sign for a church when its members “take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.”  
The next translation we will give of this word, “stones,” is the Doctrines of the Bible. By the term, “Doctrines,” I do not mean merely some three or four particular points, but all the Doctrines which build up the Church of Christ. In these days it is usual to hear people say, “Doctrines are of no importance. You may believe this or that, but you will go to Heaven all the same.” It is not so, Beloved! God has given us a Bible, common sense and judgment—and if we foolishly say, “It does not matter what we believe,” we thereby sin against God! It is important that we should be right in Doctrine, though not so important as that we should be right in heart. The tendency of this age is toward what is called, “charity.” I hold that charity is not for us to give up our convictions, but for each of us to preach them boldly! The charity of this age wants us to get rid of our angles and points. It says, “Do not say anything to offend such-and-such an individual.” Nonsense! True charity is for me to boldly speak my views and for my Brother of an opposite opinion to do the same—and for me to love him, if he holds the Head, Christ Jesus—but it is no charity to put a gag on us all. There is a great evil in the universal charity of the present day—it is Satan transforming himself into an angel of light! He sees us divided into different camps and he says, “Put down your flags! No sectarianism!” He means, “No religion.” But let us all keep to our own regiments and fight manfully for them, yet combining against the common enemy. Let us hold God’s Truth, but not with a slippery hand. If a Doctrine is true, let us grip it fast, though the earth shake or the heavens fall!  
Christian, where there is a love for God’s Truth, God will bless His Church. But because this is a time-serving age, because we have not come out plainly with those things which distinguish us from each other, because we have paid too much deference to each other’s views and have not boldly declared the great Truths of His Word—these are the reasons why God has, to some extent, deserted us.  
You say, “I do not see so much in Doctrines, after all.” Then you will not see much prosperity! I love so much what I believe to be true that I would fight for every grain of it! Not for the “stones” only, but for the very “dust thereof.” I hold that we ought not to say that any Truth of God is non-essential—it may be non-essential to salvation, but it is essential for something else! Why, you might as well take one of the jewels out of the Queen’s crown and say it is nonessential, she will be Queen all the same! Will anyone dare to tell God that any Doctrine is non-essential? O gracious Spirit, have You written what is non-essential? Have You given me a Book respecting which I say, “My father and mother believed it all, but it is not necessary for me to believe it”? God has given me a judgment— am I to follow in the wake of other people, thinking I shall be sure to be right and that God will never ask me what I was? An easy kind of religion this! It was not so in the days of good old John Bunyan and Berridge— they sang a far different song! But now people are saying, “I can listen to So-and-So and So-and-So”—men who contradict one another! We cannot think much of people who can hear opposite opinions and yet believe both to be correct! We cannot expect much growth unless you hold the Truth of God and take pleasure in the stones of Zion and, “favor the dust thereof”—every atom of it!  
Once again, the stones of Christ’s Church are the ordinances and God’s people ought to take care that they love her “stones,” and favor her “dust.” For those two Divine Institutions—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and the observance of them as handed down to us from Apostolic times—there ought to be an intense love in the hearts of God’s people, that we may be kept from the innovations of men. Let us always love what God has given us! It may be thought by some to be antiquated, yet let us never let it go, for then will God build up the ruined walls of Zion.  
I may also mention that it is a good sign of the church’s prosperity when the ministry of the Word and the Prayer Meeting are well attended— especially the latter. A friend of mine said, the other evening, “I shall go to the lecture to-night, but I did not go on Monday, for it was only a Prayer Meeting.” Why, that is the best service in the week! What is to become of your minister, in the other services, if you do not meet to pray for him? Yet many professing Christians never think of meeting for prayer—they leave that duty to the old members—those who always speak about “the unthinking horse rushing into the battle.” A Prayer Meeting ought to be regarded as superior to any other service and there should be at least all the members met together to pray. If you say, “It is only a Prayer Meeting,” even that is the “dust” of Zion, and God’s people “take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof”—the little services as well as the great services. “You shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, is come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.”  
And now, dear Friends, you may not agree with me as to my ideas of a church’s prosperity, but there must be one thing you have observed as the great need of the churches in the present day. That is the need of more prayer, more firm attachment to the walls of Zion and greater love to the Doctrines of the Bible. And I beseech you, be henceforth doubly in earnest in seeking for God’s Spirit to enable you to cling, heart and soul, to every “stone” and every grain of “dust” in God’s Temple of Truth, and let nothing be given up to please men—cleave fast to all that God has ordained and He will prosper and bless you!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**EZEKIEL 34:11-31.**

The former part of the chapter contains a prophetic denunciation against the evil shepherds—the men who fed not the flocks, but fed themselves—who fouled, with their filthy feet, the waters where the flocks drank, and trod upon the soft grass that otherwise might have afforded pasture for the sheep. After pronouncing judgment upon them, the Lord turns His thoughts to His sheep and gives this precious promise—

Verse 11. For thus says the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out. The shepherds did not do this. They left the sheep to wander and many were lost on the mountains. But where men fail, God proves Himself all-sufficient. My Hearer, are you sitting under an unprofitable ministry? Then look to the Chief Shepherd and not to the man who is unfaithful as an under-shepherd!

12. As a shepherd seeks for his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. It does not matter where the place is, the Lord will find His sheep. If it is the castle of Giant Despair, He will find them. If it is the worst dungeon in Doubting Castle, He will discover them there! They may have wandered upon the mountains of Despondency and Dejection. They may have been lost in the gorges of some dark Valley of Desperation, but the Lord says, “I will both search My sheep and seek them out.” And, mind you, He does not seek without finding! He discovers them, for He knows where they are. Oh, is not that a “cloudy and dark day” wherein we wander from God and know not how to return to Him? But clouds and darkness are banished when we see the light of His face!

13-15. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, says the Lord GOD. There is a blessed state of rest! God’s flock are not only to be fed, but they are to lie down while they feed! You have sometimes noticed a flock, at noontide, when the sun is hot, lie down upon the grass and feed while they rest. That is what God’s people are to do. They are to lie down in tranquility of spirit. They are to lie down in a state of placid submission to His will, in a state of perfect security—a state, not of idleness from the Master’s service, but still a state in which they know there is nothing for them to do for their own security since Christ has accomplished the whole of their salvation! “I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, says the Lord God.” It is not everyone of God’s people that has attained to this blessed experience, to be able to lie down in quiet confidence and rest—

*“Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment never can boast.  
To His name eternal praises,  
None of these shall ever be lost.”*

Deeply engraved on His heart their names remain. If you are His sheep, yet even if you have never come to lie down in peace, if you cannot say, “I know and am confident,” and cannot rest while you feed, it is still comforting for you to feel that all Christ’s sheep are His sheep, whether they are lying down or standing up, or even wandering from Him!

16. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away. Ah, one little thinks, perhaps, that there should be such a thing as a poor sheep driven away, but it is sometimes true! A legal preacher drives Christ’s sheep away from Christ. A seeking soul would gladly come to Jesus, but he is told that he must be something and do something before he can come. The poor sinner would trust in Jesus, but he is told, first, to get such-and-such a state of heart. He is told, “You are not the man who should be encouraged to come to Christ—you must have some deeper experience before you come.” But, blessed be God, the Good Shepherd says, if Satan has driven you away, or a legal preacher has driven you away, “I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away.”

16. And will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. Those who boast of being fat and strong, who glory in themselves—these, God will destroy! But the poor, weak, sick souls shall be fed with kindness tempered with judgment.

17, 18. And as for you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seems it a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? And to have drunk of the deep waters, but you must foul the residue with your feet? Oh, how many there are, even of God’s sheep, that foul the waters! They come up to God’s House, where, perhaps, they get some sweet morsel in the sermon, but there are some things in it with which they do not quite agree. They are walking home with some young Christian and he is thinking how blessedly he felt under the sermon, while, perhaps, that old professor is grumbling the whole time and stirring up the waters with his feet! If the pasture is not good enough for you, you should let the lambs eat of it without treading it down! Others like it, though you may not, and if you do not like it, you can always leave it! But what is the use of finding fault with it and treading it under your feet and not letting others eat of it? It is a great crime, says God—“Seems it a small thing” to tread it down under your feet, to spoil the spiritual enjoyment of your Brothers and Sisters? It seems, to some, of very little consequence what harm they do to God’s weak ones—but it is not so—it is a great sin to tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures, so you quibblers and critics had better beware!

19-21. And as for My flock, they eat that which you have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which you have fouled with your feet. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad. I wish some people would not thrust so much with side and shoulder in their controversies with their brethren. It may be all very well for a man to be honest and faithful, and push with his horns, but there are some diseased ones who cannot stand rough usage when they are only coming in all simplicity to drink at the Fountain of Life.

22, 23. Therefore will I save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them. There is only one Shepherd. As for the rest of us, we are only under-shepherds. There is only one Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ—we are simply the men He employs to look after His sheep a little. He is the Great Shepherd and when He shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in Glory. “I will set up one shepherd over them.”

23-25. And he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a Covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. Those who have seen the watching of flocks by night in the East could give you quite a picture of the meaning of this verse. Sometimes the shepherds will sit down in the midst of bushes and briars that may grow at the side of the woods and, taking some of them for firewood, they will light a fire in the night. And when the wolves come around them, the sheep are quite safe. I have read of this in books of travel—and what a beautiful thing it seems to sit, with the full moon shining down on the forest, and the fires alight, feeling that, notwithstanding all the wolves, the sheep are quite safe with the shepherds there to protect them! So is it with God’s people. They must always expect, while they are in the woods of this world, to have a scratch, now and then, from the briars and thorns, but, “they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.” God will always take care of His own, for, “the Lord knows them that are His.”

26. And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. My earnest prayer is that this church may be a great blessing to all who are around us—and I firmly believe it will be so, by God’s Grace!

27 *.*And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. The Jews will know that God is the Lord when they shall return to their own land. The poor tired sinner, best of all knows that God is God when he gets the bands of his neck broken off him! By nature, we all have bands about our necks—it is only God who takes them off. Pilgrim, you know, lost his burden when he looked at the Cross—it rolled away down into the sepulcher. And if you had asked him then, “Is God, God?” “Yes,” he would have said, “otherwise, I should not have had the bands of my neck loosed.” No man who has had the bands taken off him will ever doubt that there is a God! Let him experience that holy calm which springs from the fact of his having been set at Gospel liberty and he will say, “This is the work of God! No man, no human power could have done it.” I can never be an Arminian as long as I feel myself a sinner. I am obliged to come back to this—Lord, I must be saved by Sovereign Grace, or not at all. A single day’s experience is enough to take all the self-conceit out of a Christian if the Lord should leave him to his own unaided strength. We best know that God is God when we have had the bands broken off our necks. How many are there sitting here with bands on their necks— slaves, wearing the yoke upon their shoulders? They cannot see it, but it is there, nevertheless. Who is there who can say, “My bands are broken

from my neck”?— *“‘My sins are drowned, as in a flood,  
Of Jesus’ pure and matchless blood.’*  
I am finally discharged; the bands are broken off my neck, verily, God is  
God.”  
28, 29. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall  
the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none  
shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a garden of renown.  
Jesus is “a garden of renown,” because you may go to Him at all times  
and you will always find fruit on Him. That is more than you can say of  
any other garden. You may go to Him and you will always find the sort of  
fruit you need. Is He not “a garden of renown”? You will find healing virtue in His leaves and satisfying fruits hanging in clusters upon Him. He  
is “a garden of renown” because His Father planted Him, because He has  
food enough for all His saints and a gracious variety for all their tastes!  
And He will blossom through eternity! Because of the multitude who sit  
under His shadow and rejoice therein, He is “a garden of renown” to His  
people, for under His shadow they are begotten and brought forth! The

greatest transactions of their lives have taken place beneath the shadow  
of that old tree, “the garden of renown.”  
29**,**30*.*And they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land,  
neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know  
that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, even the house of  
Israel, are My people, says the Lord God. Thus shall they know it. Do you  
know it? Has God told it to you? Have you the witness of the Spirit within  
your spirit that you are born of God? My Hearers, never be satisfied till  
you get this, for you will never be truly at rest until you know that you  
are God’s people and until you can, each one, say, “My God, my God, you  
are my God.”  
31. And you My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your  
God, says the Lord GOD. “However much I may have lifted you up, you  
are only men, after all. But I am not a man, I am your God,” says the  
Lord. And we rest more upon what God is, than upon what man is, for  
He, “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask, or think.”

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GOD’S GLORY IN THE BUILDING UP OF ZION  
NO. 3147

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1909.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**When the LORD shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory.” Psalm 102:16.**

THE Lord Himself must “build up Zion,” or it will never be built up. He first planned it. He is the Architect of His own Church. He dug the foundations, i.e., has supplied the great Cornerstone. He, by His own power, creates each living stone, polishes it and fits it into its place. He cements the whole structure and as He first sketched the plan, so will He complete it in every iota to the praise and the glory of His wisdom, His Grace and His love. It shall be said of Zion, when all her walls are built and all her palaces completed—and when all her happy inhabitants have their mouths filled with song as they walk in white—“The Lord has built it, from the foundation even to the topstone.” I remember seeing, close by the side of the Alps, a house which had upon its front, words to this effect, “This house was built entirely by the skill, wealth and industry of its inhabitants.” It struck me as not being a very modest thing to put in front of one’s house for, after all, the structure was not very marvelous . But when we look at the glorious architecture of the Church of God, it is no mean part of its luster that it may fittingly bear such an inscription as this, “This House was built entirely by the wisdom, the munificence and the power of the Infinite Jehovah.”

I. But while the text reminds us of this Truth which I hope we never can forget, it also brings to our minds three or four other Truths of God. And the first point of our discourse shall be ZION BUILT UP.

I suppose we shall all consider that one essential to the building up of Zion would be practical conversion. It is of small avail for a man to say he is building up a church where the power of the Holy Spirit is not seen in calling sinners out of darkness into marvelous light. There may be periods in which conversions are few, but if instead of their being exceptional, this should come to be the rule in one’s ministry, there would be grave cause to suspect that God was not working within the minister— certainly not in the sense of building up the Church. We find not infrequently, in Holy Scripture, that the fathers of households are called, “builders,” and that the term, “the building of a house,” is constantly used in respect to the birth and training up of a family. Now, in the great Christian family, our converts are the new-born children and a family is not built up for God except with these sons and daughters who are like stones polished after the similitude of a palace. We little know the blessing which young converts bring to us. They quicken the pulse of old Christians, they strengthen and confirm the faith of those who have long been walking in the Truth and they do, as it were, infuse new blood into the fellowship of the saints. They come to us as God’s message from on high. They are tokens for good and whereas we might have thought, perhaps, that the triumphs of the Cross were confined to the heroic age when the Spirit of God was poured out in Pentecostal measure, yet as we see our sons and daughters converted and the great miracle of regeneration still being performed, we take heart and are of good courage to go on in the work of the Lord! Conversions we must have, for there is no building up of Zion without them!

And then a public confession of faith must follow conversion. Though the invisible Church of God is built up by conversions, the outward Church is only built up as men and women associate together in the holy society which we call “the Church.” It is the duty of every Christian—no, it is the instinct of his spiritual life—to avow the faith which he has received! And avowing it, he finds himself associated with others who have made the same profession and he assists them in holy labor. When he is strong, he ministers of his strength to the weak. And when he is, himself, weak, he borrows strength from those who, just then, may happen to be strong in the faith. Where were our Christian institutions if Church fellowship were broken up? Plainly, if it is right for one Christian to remain out of Church fellowship, it is right for all! And then, if there were no Churches, there would be no institutions—and where would the Gospel, itself, be? I would not lay too much stress on the Church of God, but I venture to ask you, is it not written that she is “the pillar and ground of the Truth?” If, then, I withhold my confession of faith and my personal communion with the visible Church, I to that extent weaken the pillar and ground of the faith. We need confessions of faith as well as conversions.

By a Church being thus formed in order to its being built up, something more is needed. We cannot build without union. A house is not a load of bricks, neither is the Church a mere conglomeration of human beings. A house must have its doors, its windows, its foundations, its rafters and its ceiling. So a Church must be organized—it must have its distinct offices and officers, it must have its departments of labor—and proper men must be found, according to Christ’s own appointment, to preside over those departments.

Our Savior was raised up on high to receive gifts for men and to give gifts to men. And those gifts are first, Apostles, then pastors and teachers, and Evangelists, and so on, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Some of the old Roman walls are compacted with such excellent cement that it would be almost impossible to separate one stone from another. In fact, the whole mass has become consolidated like a solid rock—so embedded in cement that you cannot distinguish one stone from another. Happy the Church thus built up, where each cares not only for his own prosperity, but for the prosperity of all—where if there is any joy in one member, all the members rejoice, and if there is sorrow in any one part of the body, all the rest of the body is in sorrow, too, “remembering them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” And yet, what are some churches but semi-religious clubs, mere conventions of people gathered together? They have not in them that holy soul which is the essence of unity! There is no life to keep them in entirety. Why, the body would soon become disjointed and a mass of rottenness if the soul were not in it—and if the Spirit of Christ is absent, the whole fabric of the outward church begins to fall to pieces—for where there is no life, there can be no true union!

More than this, to build up a Church, there needs to be edification and instruction in the faith. It is, I think, a matter for deep regret that this is not an age in which Christian people desire to be edified. It is an age in which they like to have their ears tickled and delight to have a multiplicity of anecdotes and of exciting metaphors—but they care little to be well instructed in the sound and solid Doctrines of the Grace of God. In the old Puritan times, sermons must have been tiresome to the thoughtless, but nowadays I think they are more tiresome to the thoughtful! The Christian of those days wanted to know a great deal of the things of God. And provided that the preacher could open up some mystery to him, or explain some point of Christian practice to make him holier and wiser, he was well satisfied, though the man might be no orator and might lead him into no fields of novel speculation. Christians, then, did not need a new faith but, having received the old faith, they wished to be well rooted and grounded in it and, therefore, they sought daily for illumination as well as for quickening! They desired not only to have the emotions excited, but also to have the intellect richly stored with Divine Truth—and there must be much of this in every Church if it is to be built up! There need certainly be no neglect of an appeal to the passions and no forgetfulness of what is popular and exciting—but with this we must have the solid bread-corn of the Kingdom of God, without which God’s children will faint in the weary way of this wilderness!

It does not strike me, however, that I have yet given a full picture of the building up of a Church, for a Church such as I have described would not answer the end for which Christ ordained it. Christ ordained His Church to be His great aggressive method in combating with sin and with the world that lies in the Wicked One. It is to be a light, not to itself, as a candle in a dark lantern, but a light unto that which is outside. Albeit we are not saved by works, yet the ultimate result of salvation must always be work. The

 cause of salvation lies in Grace, but the effect of salvation appears in working. As sure as ever the Grace of God fills a soul, that soul desires to see others brought in. That respectable church, that wealthy church which is quite satisfied to have no debt upon its own building, content if its minister is as sparsely remunerated as possible— without enthusiasm, without zeal, always harping on the string of prudence, conservatism and orthodoxy, having no care whatever to be aggressive—such a church needs to be built on other foundations, to get rid of its wood, hay and stubble, and to be built on gold, silver and precious stones, or otherwise it will not honor Christ!

It strikes me that it is necessary for the edification of every Christian that he should have something to do. We learn to be soldiers by being drilled. No, the veteran is taught to fight by fighting! I think most ministers know that one of the best methods of learning to preach is to preach—and the best way of learning Christianity is to be a Christian practically. Said one, “If you would do good, be good.” And I have sometimes thought if we would be good, we must do good—not to make us so, but as the best discipline to keep us in good health and good training! Do not let us hope that we ourselves can be devoted to God except by Christian service! And let us not hope that the Church can ever be so devoted except by casting about in the world to do for Christ whatever came to its hands.

But I must go yet a step further. After a Church has become all that I have been describing, the next thing it ought to do should be to think of the formation of other Churches. The building up of an empire must often be by colonization. Her majesty’s dominions, upon which we proudly say that, “the sun never sets,” have been greatly enlarged by the sons and daughters of Britain who have gone to other lands. And the true process of increasing the Church of Christ must be by her forming colonies. Who dares to deny that in the building of many places of worship in England and elsewhere, the devil has had as much to do as Christ has had? I mean in our denomination, if not in any other. A great number of chapels have been as the result of schism, bad spirit, bickering, jealousy and I know not what—quarrelling and contending, perhaps, about some points of Truth which, if important, could not be so important as the spirit of love and of unity! Many and many a time a house has been dedicated to God when the first thought that led to it—and the last act that finished it—were simply a thought and an act of pride, or envy, or pure sectarian bigotry and nothing more! Now, I do not think, although He has no doubt overruled it for good, that this is legitimate. But for a number of Christian people associated together in a Church and finding that the Church has grown strong enough to be able to afford to lose them—for these to swarm off and form another Church and give of their substance to build another house—seems to me to be a legitimate and proper method in which Zion may be built up in these, our realms.

II. THE BUILDING UP OF ZION IS, ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, CONNECTED WITH JEHOVAH’S BEING GLORIFIED.  
“When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters! It would need a seraph to tell of all the Glory which has come to God through the building up of His Church. Heaven rang with acclamations when the angels first learned that God designed to have a Church on the earth. When they perceived, by the glimmering light of the first promise, that there was to be a Seed of the woman as well as a seed of the serpent, they began to hymn Jehovah’s praise and, when Christ was given and so the foundation of the Church was actually laid, the Glory of creation was eclipsed and even the splendor of Providence might almost have been forgotten in the more transcendent Glory of Grace. God had done marvelously before, but never did He seem so Divine as when He gave His dear Son and when, in the holy life and dying pangs of the Son of His love, the foundation of the Church was laid! So, too, God is glorified in every single part of the building of His Church. There is not a stone quarried from the dark pit of Nature, or polished by the tools of Grace, or put into its position without fresh honor to God and new Glory to His name. He cannot be more glorious, but He appears more richly glorious in the building up of His Church. And what will be the Glory when the topstone is brought out—when the last elect one shall be cemented to the visible whole? What shall be the undying melody, the unceasing song of ages as to principalities and powers shall be made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God?  
Sometimes, however, a suspicion has arisen in the minds of God’s people that God was not glorified in His Church. And the text almost seems to hint, not that God is not glorified, but at any rate, that He is not so much glorified in the Church at one time as at another, for it says, “When the Lord shall build up Zion,” as if He were not always building up Zion, at least not to the same extent. We know from painful experience that there are lulls—seasons when a dead calm comes over the Church— and then, to the minds of many, Gods Glory is not revealed. In consequence thereof, the inhabitants of Zion hang their harps upon the willows and go a-mourning. And yet, had we more faith, and put sense more in the background, we might sing to our Well-Beloved a song touching His vineyard, even when the wild boar out of the forest is wasting her and her hedges are being broken down. The wave recedes, but the tide advances! The day may seem to be dark but every hour is bringing on the noon. God advances not by little steps. We must not judge Him by inches who is not even to be measured by leagues, nor by handfuls when the mountains are too small for His hands—and He took up the isles as a very little thing. Our belief is that the whole way through, God is building up His Church, and that He does appear in His Glory.  
Perhaps one or two thoughts may make this more clear to us. God often appears in Glory to me as one of His builders and I will tell you in what respect. When I have been sitting to see enquirers, I have sometimes found that God has blessed to the conversion of souls some of my poorest sermons—those which I thought I could weep over—which seemed more than ordinarily weak and lacking in all the elements likely to make them blessed, except that they were sincerely spoken. When I have seen that the work was done though the workman, naturally weak, was on that occasion more than usually depressed with infirmity, I have only been able to lift up my hands and say, “Now, Lord, You appear in Your Glory, since You do build up Zion and convert sinners by the most unlikely means—and Your Truth, apparently when most feebly spoken, works the mightiest results. This is to make Your name glorious, indeed!”  
Another thing has sometimes made one see God in His Glory. Persons have been brought up and educated under sermons that are as hostile to spiritual life as the plague is to natural life! They have, from their youth up, seen religion in all its gaudy show of symbolism and yet one hearing of the simple Gospel has been sufficient for their conversion. Perhaps the mere reading of a single text has untwisted the knots of 40 years—and the despotism of the priesthood over the mind has fallen at the touch of a single passage of God’s Word! The case of Luther is one instance of this, and in all such cases God appears in His Glory. If you will look at each conversion, and especially at the sudden conversion of those who for long years have been inured to the very reverse of the Gospel of Christ, you will see God appearing in His Glory!  
Think, too, of the agencies which are abroad hostile to the Church of God. The Jews were glad to see the walls of Jerusalem rise because they remembered Geshem, Tobiah, Sanballat and all the rest that laughed and jeered at them. Up went the walls though these enemies laughed— and the foxes did not break down the walls though Tobiah so ventured to prophesy. In this age, too, the Church is not without her adversaries and they are of a very dangerous sort. They are not always outspoken adversaries. Some of them teach us how to doubt—not because they doubt, they say, but because it is so healthy a thing for our minds to be rid of the bondage of old-fashioned dogmas! They are not themselves unsound, but still, if a Brother should happen to be so, they will defend him, thereby providing a defense for themselves when they should more fully need it. If they would only state what they believe, or what they do not believe, it would be easy to deal with these foes—but inasmuch as the whole thing is too shadowy and too vague, we feel as if we were under the plague of flies which were in Egypt when we have to deal with these minute adversaries!  
But let us reflect that notwithstanding all this, God is still building up His Church. Looking back over the last ten or 20 years, am I too sanguine if I say that the age is, after all, better than it was? I do not mean that the world is better, but I do mean that as a whole, there is more evangelical preaching and more earnest pleading with God now than there were ten years ago. I am not given to complimenting, but I do feel that we have made an advance and that the Christian Church is more awake than it was. I grant you that the foes are more vociferous. So let them be! I suppose the nearer the moon gets to its full, the more the dogs bark, and the nearer the harvest is to getting ripe, the more numerous is the horde of birds that come to feed upon the grain. This must be expected—and God appears in His Glory the more His enemies surround His Church!  
Putting all these things together—poor instruments, poor materials and numerous foes—let us say that when God builds up Zion under such circumstances as these, He truly appears in His Glory!

What a splendid thing was that—may we see it repeated in our own day—when the twelve Apostles first attacked Roman idolatry! The prestige of ages made the idolatry of Rome venerable. It had an imperial Caesar and all his legions at its back—and every favorable omen to defend it. Yet those twelve men, with no patronage but the patronage of the King of Kings, with no learning except that which they had learned at the feet of Jesus, with weapons as simple as David’s sling and stone, went forth to the fight—and you know how the grisly head of the monstrous idolatry was, by-and-by, in the hands of the Christian champion as he returned rejoicing from the fray. So shall it be yet again, and then amidst the acclamation of myriads of witnesses, shall God appear in His Glory!  
III. With great brevity, let us now observe THE HOPE EXCITED. If God is glorified by the building up of Zion, then most certainly Zion will be built! If He is glorified by the conversion of sinners and by the banding together of converted men and women, then it seems but natural to hope, yes, with certainty we may conclude that the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform it!  
Let me suppose that you had been created as a solitary creature and that it had been made known to you, by the mouth of God, Himself, that it would be to God’s Glory to create unnumbered worlds—would you be unreasonable in looking for the first day in which the heavens and the earth should be created? You would soon come to an absolute certainty, putting faith in the prophecy, that since God would be glorified in creating, He would create! And supposing when you saw the world created, you knew, from God’s own mouth, that it would be to His Glory for Him to take the reins of human affairs and manage everything according to the counsel of His own will—you would feel persuaded that He would do it. Well, you are clearly informed here that it is for God’s Glory to build up His Church! Then draw the inference—draw it boldly, no, draw it confidently, and say—“If it is for God’s Glory, then it must and shall be done.”  
I like the spirit in which Luther used to say that when he could get God into his quarrels, he felt safe. When it was Luther alone he did not know which way it would go, but when he felt that his God would be compromised and dishonored if such a thing were not done, and would be glorified if it were done, then he felt safe enough. So, dear Friends, in the great crusade of Truth, is not God with us beyond a doubt? The ship of the Church carries Christ and all His fortunes, so how can she be wrecked? The honor of the Church is intertwisted with the honor and glory of Christ—if she shall pass away, if she is deserted, then where is her Captain, her Head, her Husband? But as His honor must be safe, so shall hers be! Zion shall be lifted up, that God may appear in His Glory!  
IV. Our whole subject SUGGESTS AN ENQUIRY.  
Have I any part or lot in this work which is to bring glory to God? I may have to do with it in two ways, as a built one, and as a builder. I can have nothing to do with it in the latter capacity unless I have first had to do with it in the former. God will be glorified in the building up of Zion— shall I minister to His Glory by being part of the Zion that is to be built up? I remember to have heard one who half-solaced himself in the prospect of his eternal ruin. He was a hardened sinner, but he was trying to draw some sort of comfort from the thought that if he were lost forever, he should glorify Christ. I was startled! Horror seized me when he put it in that light. A Truth of God in some sense, I could not bear to see it so handled by him as to clothe it in the vestments of a lie. I was obliged to quote the other text, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies.” You do not find God ever speaking of deriving glory from the death of him that dies! You do not find that it administers anything of gratification to the Eternal Mind that a soul should perish. There is a glory to His Justice, doubtless—an awful splendor wrapped about the executioner’s axe—but it is a glory of which God says but little and of which my text says nothing at all! The true Glory of God is like the glory of the king who will not glory in the numbers executed upon the hill of death, but who glories in his subjects who are happy and blessed. God glories not in the soul whom there is a dire necessity to cast away, but in the soul whom Almighty Grace has chosen, redeemed and saved!  
I should think, Friend, if your reason is in a right state, that you will have some wish to glorify the God that made you. “The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master’s crib”—do you not know? Will you not consider? If you build a house, you expect some comfort from it. If you sow a field, you expect to gather some grain from it. And shall God, who has made you, who has put breath into your nostrils and who feeds you every day—shall He, then, have no honor out of you, no glory at your hands? Shall you be a valueless waif and a stray drifting along on the tides of time, with none to care for you because you have lost your compass and live not for the true objective of human life? May I ask you to put this question to yourselves?  
The enquiry whether you have anything to do or not with glorifying God in the building up of His Church may be very serviceable to you. If you find that you have no interest at all in the matter, may not that thought be blessed of God to make you start? Oh, that men would start! They sleep when everlasting wrath is impending! Oh, that they would feel the shock and avert the stroke! A startling preacher is needed by a slumbering age. Be startling preachers to yourselves just now. O men and women, there are some of you—it were hopeless to expect it were not so—in whom God will have no glory from your being built into His Church, for you are like the stones of the valley, which are not built up, but lie there useless, to be broken at last by the hammer when the Breaker shall come forth to the work of destruction! Would you glorify God, Sinner? Have you never heard the question asked of Christ by the Jews, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” And this was Christ’s answer, “This is the work of God, (the chief work of all), that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” If you would glorify God, humble yourself, bow the knee and kiss the Son and receive salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ! And then, being built upon this foundation, you shall glorify God!  
The enquiry shapes itself afresh. Have you anything to do with glorifying God in respect of being, yourself, a builder of Zion? It is a shame that these lips should have to say it, but we must speak the sad truth that there are some who profess to be built, but who are not building—some who say that they are servants, but are not serving. Some who profess to be in the vineyard, but are not working. Some who say they are soldiers, but are not fighting! My Brothers and Sisters, I count it to be one of the most precious parts of my spiritual heritage that I am permitted to serve Christ. And let me say that if my Lord Jesus gave me nothing else on earth but the privilege of serving Him, I would bless Him for it to all eternity! It is no mean honor to be a servant of the King of Kings! There is such pleasure in honoring Christ and in winning souls, that I can scarcely believe that any of you have ever tasted it if you are not hungering after more of it! Did you ever win a soul to Christ? Did you ever get a grip of the hand of spiritual gratitude? Did you ever see the tear starting from the eye when the convert said, “Bless you! I shall remember you in Heaven, for you have brought me to Christ”? Oh, my dear Friend, you will not be satisfied merely with this, for this is a kind of food that makes men hungry! Oh, that you had a rich banquet of it and yet wanted still more!  
The Church of Christ shall and must be built! Even if you and I sit still, it will be built. This a glorious Truth of God though it is often perverted to a mischievous end—the Church will be built, even without us, but oh, we shall miss the satisfaction of helping in its building! Yes, it will grow. Every stone will be put in its place and the pinnacle will soar to its predestinated elevation—but every stone, from foundation to pinnacle, will seem to say to you, “You had nothing to do with this! You had no hand in this!” When Cyrus took one of his guests round his garden, the guest admired it greatly and said he had much pleasure in it. “Ah,” said Cyrus, “but you have not so much pleasure in this garden as I have, for I planted every tree in it myself.” One reason why Christ has so much pleasure in His Church is because He did so much for it. And one reason why some saints will have a greater fullness of Heaven than others to rejoice in will be because they did more for Heaven than others did. By God’s Grace, they were enabled to bring more souls there—and as they look upon the Church they may, without self-reliance or self-conceit, ascribing it all to Grace, remember what they were enabled to do as instruments in the hands of the Lord towards its building up. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 123, 124, 125.**

Psalm 123:1. Unto You lift I up my eyes, O You that dwell in the heavens. Our eyes are far too apt to look below, or to look within, or to look around. But it is wisdom on our part to look up. There is always something blessed to see upward, especially when we look up to Him who dwells in the highest heavens—our Father, our Savior, our Comforter. There is little down here that is worth looking at, but there is everything for our comfort when we look up.

2. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He has mercy upon us.

 [See Sermon

#2654, Volume45—WAKEFUL AND WATCHFUL EYES—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is what we are looking for—the mercy of the Lord our God. It comes from His great heart, through His almighty hands. A wave of His hand is sufficient to drive away all our troubles. When He opens His hand, He supplies the needs of every living thing, so mighty and so bountiful is He. Let us, therefore, keep our eyes upon our Lord’s hands “until that He has mercy upon us.”

3. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us. The longing soul does not wait in utter silence without expressing its desires. I have heard of some who have said that their will was so fully conformed to God’s will that they had left off praying to Him! Surely that was a Satanic delusion, for the will of Christ was perfectly conformed to that of His Father, yet for that very reason He abounded in prayer! We must be in an evil case if we leave off praying. The Psalmist says that he and those who were likeminded with him waited until the Lord had mercy upon them, and then he began a sort of litany, “Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us.” He uses the same words twice as if to express the greatness of his need, the clearness of his perception of what he needed, the earnestness of his desire and his expectation that his need would be supplied. In this verse and the previous one, we have the petition, “Have mercy upon us,” presented no less than three times, for mercy is the greatest need of the best man who ever lived!

3. For we are exceedingly filled with contempt. That is a sharp cutting thing, most trying to the soul that has to endure it, and many have been greatly depressed in spirit by the contempt that has been poured upon them. But, Lord, Your mercy is a cure for man’s need of mercy. Your thoughtfulness of us will take off the edge from man’s contempt of us.

4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. It does not seem to be a desirable thing to be at ease, for it was such people who were the scorners of the Psalmist and his godly companions. Job also said, “He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.” In the stagnant air of a life of ease, all kinds of mischiefs breed— and especially that fever of pride which leads ungodly men to have contempt for God’s people.

Psalm 124:1-3. If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick. That is, alive.

3. When their wrath was kindled against us. If it had not been God who had engaged to take care of His people, they would all have perished—and that God must be Jehovah. I wish that our translators had not been carried away by the superstition of the Jews and that they had used the word, “Jehovah,” where it is employed in the original—then this verse and the previous one would have read, “If it had not been Jehovah who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up alive,” as some beasts, birds and fishes swallow their prey and as some men would do with us if they could, that is, swallow us up alive, making a short and speedy end of us, not waiting to tear us in pieces, but swallowing us whole and alive!

4, 5. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. The figure is varied. We are first likened to the lamb that is liable to be swallowed by the lion, and next we are compared to one who is in danger of being carried away by a devouring flood which shows no pity to any, but sweeps everything before it down to destruction.

6. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth. Neither to Satan and his lieges, nor to wicked men, has God delivered us. We are not to be their prey, for God claims us as His own!

7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we have escaped. [See Sermon #1696, Volume 28—THE BIRD ES  
CAPED FROM THE SNARE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a joyous song that is for the escaped soul to sing! Whenever a Christian has fallen into difficulties through not walking uprightly, when he has gone astray from the right path and has been caught in the fowler’s net—and is in such trouble that he does not know what to do—then God comes and cuts the net, perhaps, with the sharp knife of affliction and the imprisoned soul again finds freedom from worldly associations and happy liberty in the service of God. I do not know a sweeter song than this that he and others of God’s rescued birds can sing as they mount up into the clear light of God’s Countenance, “Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we have escaped.”

8. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made Heaven and earth. This is a good lesson for us to learn from the past experience of the Lord’s people. God and God alone did deliver His servants in the past and herein is our confidence for the present and the future—our help is in the name—the revealed and manifested Character—of Jehovah, the Creator of Heaven and earth!

Psalm 125:1. They that trust in the LORD shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever. [See Sermon #1450, Volume 24—THE  
IMMOVABILITY OF THE BELIEVER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What comfort there is in this verse to all who trust in the Lord! We never expect to see anyone tear up Mount Zion by the roots. The Romans have been there and plowed Mount Zion as a field, but they could not remove it—it is there still and the natural features are the same as they were in the days of Abraham and David. Mount Zion “cannot be removed but abides forever.” Men have swept away much that was built on it, but Mount Zion is still there, nor shall any human power ever be able to remove it. And, glory be to God, neither men nor devils shall ever be able to remove us if we trust in the Lord, for we “shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever.”

2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about His people from henceforth even forever. [See Sermon #161, Volume 3—THE  
SECURITY OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] At Jerusalem there is first the deep valley around the hill. And then afterwards a range of encircling mountains, but the munitions of stupendous rock are nothing compared with those eternal ramparts which protect the people of God.

3. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands into iniquity. “The rod of the wicked” may fall upon the lot of the righteous, but it shall not “rest” there! The godly may be oppressed for a season, but that season shall not be too long for them to endure. God will not allow His servants to be tried above what they are able to bear, lest their faith should fail and, in order to escape from their oppressors, they should “put forth their hands unto iniquity.”

4. Do good, O LORD, unto those that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. The Psalmist prays to Jehovah to do good to those whom He has made good, for there are none who are naturally good. And there is a special goodness which He bestows upon those whom He has made good by the effectual working of His good Spirit. When they no longer lean this way or that way, but stand upright in their integrity, then shall they know this special goodness of the Lord.

5. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways. Ways of policy, of lies, of self-seeking, of presumptuous sin, of backsliding.  
5. The LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. If they will work iniquity, they shall go with those that work iniquity! Each one shall go to his own company. If we have loved the people of God on earth and have walked in God’s ways here, we may confidently expect to be gathered with His elect above. But if we have turned aside to crooked ways, what can we expect but that where the workers of iniquity go, we, too, shall go there? “As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, Jehovah shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.”  
5. But peace shall be upon Israel. What a blessed benediction that is— peace! It is the one thing that we need above everything else. We are sometimes glad to know more, but we often tire even of knowing and would rather sit down as children who are satisfied with what they have been told by others who do know. We wish to be very useful in the world—and, blessed be God, we can never rest unless we are useful. But there are times of weariness when the best blessing for us—the blessing which shall most help to fit us for future service—is perfect peace, that peace of which our Savior said to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”  
Are all of you who are trusting in Christ in the enjoyment of that peace at this moment? If not, you are not living up to your privileges as Believers.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1141 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOOD NEWS FOR THE DESTITUTE  
NO. 1141

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 9, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” Psalm 102:17.**

OBSERVE that the verse which precedes the text describes the Lord as appearing in His Glory. His Zion is to be built up and therefore her King puts on the robes of His splendor. The imagery sets forth the Lord as a great Monarch, superintending with great pomp and state, the building of a sumptuous palace. We see Him commanding the architects and the workmen, and passing from point to point amid attending courtiers. Trumpets are sounding, banners are displayed, princes and nobles glitter in their array and the King appears in His Glory.

But who is this, whose mournful wail, disturbs the harmony? From where comes this ragged beggar who bows before the Prince? Surely he will be dragged away by the soldiers, or cast into prison by the wardens for daring to pollute so grand a ceremony by such wretched presumption! Were there not streets, lanes and dark corners enough for beggars? Why need he thrust himself in where his rags are so much out of place? But look! The King hears him! The sound of the trumpet has not drowned the voice of the destitute.

His Majesty listens to him while he asks for an alms and in matchless compassion pities all his groans. Who is this King, but Jehovah? Of Him, only, is it said, “He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” The verse is enhanced in its beauty by its connection, even as a fair jewel receives an added beauty from the lovely neck upon which it sparkles. Let us read the verse, again, in this soft silver light. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.”

It is clear that the heart of the Lord delights in the cries of needy souls and nothing can prevent His hearing them. No occupation is so sublime as to distract the Lord’s attention from the prayer of the most humble of His mourners. The songs of seraphs, the symphonies of angels, the ceaseless chorales of the redeemed are not more sweet in the ears of the allmerciful Jehovah than the faint breathings of poor dying wretches who confess themselves condemned by His Justice and, therefore, appeal to His loving kindness and tender mercy!

This morning I am going to preach about the destitute. I hope there are many of them here. At any rate many are here who once were destitute, and would be so now, if it were not for the riches of Divine Grace. Hear me, you poor in spirit, and may the Lord comfort you by my words. Our first work, this morning, shall be to speak about a spiritual pauper, the “destitute.” Then we will talk of his special occupation—it is clear that he

has taken to begging, for the text speaks twice of his “prayer,” and prayer is the essence of begging.

Then, thirdly, here is a very natural fear of this spiritual beggar, namely, that his prayer will not be regarded and will even be despised. And then, fourthly, the whole text is a most comfortable assurance to this spiritual mendicant that his begging will be successful, for the Lord of whom he begs will regard his prayer and will not despise his supplication.

I. First, then, let us go down among the beggars and look upon THE SPIRITUAL PAUPER. It will do you good to have your spiritual gentility shocked for a while. And it will be a lasting benefit if you are made to feel, anew, your own poverty, and to cry, “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.” The spiritual pauper is, in our text, described as destitute. And you may take the word in its extreme sense—the spiritually poor man is not only positively—but utterly, thoroughly—terribly destitute!

He is destitute of all wealth of merit or possession of righteousness. Time was, years ago, when he was as good as anybody else, in his own esteem, and perhaps a little better. He was rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing. True, he had some faults, but he considered them to be outweighed by his excellences. And if he fell, sometimes, into error and sin, he had most ingenious excuses with which to shift the blame—either some companions beguiled him, or else his circumstances necessitated the fault.

He was a sinner, he admitted that, but he put his own meaning upon the title, so that he did not feel degraded by it. He was no vagrant or pauper in the universe of God, but rather a fellow citizen with the worthy, and of the household of self-satisfaction. He was at least as good as the average of men and possibly better than, under present circumstances, men may generally be expected to be. And if he did not actually claim anything of God by way of merit, it was because he deferred to the crotchets of the Protestant religion. But in his inmost soul he really thought he could have maintained a decent position on the score of good works—and have shown up a very presentable righteousness had it been asked for.

He never did, in his heart, see anything amiss in the Pharisee’s prayer, “God I thank You that I am not as other men are.” He, himself, reflected with a very great deal of comfort upon the fact that he had never been a drunk, that no profane word had dropped from his mouth, that he had been upright in his business and that to all intents and purposes he was a reputable and respectable man, worthy of the Divine regard. This, however, is all changed.

The man has come down from an emperor to a penniless beggar. His outward character may not have changed, but his own estimate of himself is as different as light from darkness. Now he sees the hollowness of an outward morality which does not proceed from a renewed heart. Now he knows that the sins which he has committed are exceedingly sinful and that the religious professions he has made, being nothing better than mere pretences—the heart not going with them—were a mockery of God and an insult to the Most High.

Look at him, then, you rich men! Here was one of yourselves, richer than most, and far superior to the majority! But now he is as poor as the unfeathered bird which cruelty has flung from its nest. He has no good work that he dares bring before his God, but he admits to ten thousands of sins—every one of which accuses him before the Most High and demands punishment at the hands of Justice. He feels this and shivers in his wretched rags. Do you inquire, “Where is he?” Is he not here at this moment? Can I not see his tears and hear his groans? “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” is his cry! He is so far from claiming anything like merit that he loathes the very thought of self-righteousness, feeling himself to be guilty, undeserving, ill-deserving, and Hell-deserving—meriting, only to be banished from the Presence of God forever!

There is a kind of destitution which is bearable. A man may be quite penniless, but he may be so accustomed to it that he does not care. He may even be more happy in rags and filth than in any other condition. Persons of this order are well known to the guardians of our workhouses. Have you ever seen the lazzaroni of Naples? Notwithstanding all their attempts to move your compassion, they generally fail after you have once seen them lying on their backs in the sun, amusing themselves the livelong day. You feel sure that beggary is their natural element. They are perfectly satisfied to be beggars, like their fathers, and to bring up their sons to the profession. The ease of poverty suits their constitutions.

But the spiritual pauper is not a member of this free and easy lazzaroni club by any manner of means—he is destitute of contentment! The poverty which is upon him is one which he cannot endure, or for a moment rest under. It is a heavy yoke to him. He sighs and cries under it. His is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He knows there is something better than the state into which he has fallen and he pines for it. He knows that if he does not escape from his present condition he will fall into woes infinitely worse—and he trembles at the grim prospect of it. Therefore he sighs and cries before God in bitterness of spirit, “Have mercy upon Your poor destitute creature! Have mercy upon Your undeserving servant.”

He has no contentment in his poverty. His penury is irksome to the last degree and he cannot complacently endure it. A man, however, if he is without money, is still not utterly destitute if he has strength—a stout pair of limbs can work and earn wages. Such a man will soon get out of his destitution. Only give him a chance and those rags will be exchanged for decent attire. He will no longer be skin and bones. He will improve into good condition—only give him employment and fair pay. But this is not the case with the spiritual pauper. He has no merit and he cannot earn any. His strength is gone.

Once he was so strong that he used to think if Heaven were to be merited by good works he could do it, or, if not, if eternal life were to be had by conversion and by believing in Christ, he could be converted at any time, and believe in Jesus just whenever he liked. Religion appeared to

him to be a very easy matter. “Only believe and you shall be saved”—could that be managed in the twinkling of an eye? If ever he heard a sermon about, “Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, and few there are that find it,” he disliked the doctrine and the preacher. He could not agree with such narrow-minded views. He felt that he had all requisite spiritual power within himself and he did not believe either in natural depravity or spiritual inability.

He had done well in business and was a self-made man. He had worked himself up from the lowest ranks into an honorable position—surely he could do the same in the matters of his soul as in the affairs of the world! That gentleman is not one of the destitute, you clearly see—and I have nothing to say to him except that I pray God to take away his fancied power from him and make him feel himself to be weak as water. The spiritual pauper feels that he can do nothing right and that he cannot even think a good thought without the help of Divine Grace. As to believing in Jesus, simple as that matter is, he has come to this pass—

*“I would, but can’t believe,  
Then all would easy be.  
I would but cannot, Lord, believe,  
My help must come from Thee.”*

He is so staggered with doubts and fears, and so bemisted and beclouded with dark remembrances of his past sins that he does not seem able to fix his eyes upon the atoning Sacrifice and to find comfort there. He is destitute, in the very worst sense, because he is “without strength.” Still, a man may be very poor at present and he may have no power to earn his bread, but he may not be utterly destitute, for he may have an estate in reserve. When his long-lived uncle dies he may come into a fortune. It may be that in some years’ time, if the steed can live till then, the grass will be up to its knees. Many a man pressingly needs present help, though, by-and-by, he will have enough to spare.

The spiritual pauper has nothing to look forward to which can at all alleviate his soul’s distress. His future is even gloomier than his present. Well do I remember when I looked out upon eternity and saw nothing but a fearful prospect of judgment and fiery indignation for me! I peered into the future and I could not expect to live a better life. I had so often tried and failed that I feared I might be left to a callous conscience and go from bad to worse. In fact I knew I would unless Christ would interpose and save me. And as for my hope in another world, alas, alas, I saw nothing but the Great White Throne, an angry Judge and everlasting fire in Hell!

I had no hopes, but numberless fears. Such is the outlook of every man whom God really convinces of sin. He is stripped of hope, itself, and the man who has lost hope has lost all—He is destitute with a vengeance—for him there remains neither in Heaven nor on earth any hope, whatever, unless he can obtain one as the gift of Grace. He has, indeed, reason to cry unto his God. A man who is spiritually destitute is destitute of all friends who can help him, for those who love him best can only pray for him—they cannot save him. We who would help him, if we could, can only point him to the Savior. But he has blind eyes and how shall he see while he is in the dark?

He is also destitute of all plans for doing better. Schemers sometimes manage to live by their wits when they can no longer subsist by their hands, but the poor soul who is really destitute before God has not even a plan by which to help himself! All his schemes have turned into mere wind bags and his hopes from his own wisdom have altogether failed him. He has, in fact, nothing left. Nothing whatever. He is as naked as Adam and Eve beneath the trees of the garden when God, their offended Maker, met them, and they sought to cover themselves with fig leaves. He has come to the very lowest degree of spiritual penury—it is only necessary for death to put an end to his present misery for him to be in the ruin that will never end.

Such is the case of the spiritually destitute. I do not know whether I have managed to depict, in any way, the state of any really distressed conscience here. I have tried to do so, but if I have failed, suffer me to add another sentence or two. If any in this place feel that they are sinful, feel that they deserve the wrath of God, feel that they cannot help themselves. If any feel that unless Infinite Mercy shall interpose they must forever be lost. If, moreover, they cannot find any reason why they should be saved, cannot find any argument which could move the heart of Justice to have pity on them—they are just the very persons intended by my description and by the text! I pray them not to put away from them the comfort which the text contains, but listen to it as we read it again—“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.”

So much, then, for the spiritual pauper.  
II. Secondly, here is HIS SUITABLE OCCUPATION—he has taken to begging and it is a very fitting occupation for him. Indeed, there is nothing else he can do! When a man is shut up to one course, it is useless to raise objections to his following it, for necessity has no law and hunger will break through stone walls. The man can do nothing else but beg! And so, since we cannot let him perish and he will not, himself, perish through lethargy, he turns to do the only thing he can do, namely, to begging and praying.  
Blessed is that soul which is shut up to prayer! It thinks itself accursed, but, indeed, now the blessing is come upon it. If you feel you cannot do anything but pray, and equally feel that you must pray, I have hopes for you. If now you dare not appeal to Justice, but simply cry, “Mercy, Lord! Mercy, mercy! I have no merits, but, oh, forgive me for Your mercy’s sake!” I am right glad of it. Why, dear Friends, you are shut up in the very same place where David was shut up when he could only say, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions.”  
You are shut up where every soul has been shut up that ever was saved, for unless you are driven to admit that nothing can save you but undeserved mercy, pity, and free Grace—you have not come to the place where God can meet with you in pardon. But when you stand as a condemned criminal at the bar and plead, “Guilty, guilty, guilty,” then you stand where God can look upon you with an eye of pity and can save you. The trade of begging is one which is most suitable for a spiritual pauper, because, if he cannot do anything else, I guarantee you he can do this right well!  
They say in London that many of our beggars are mere actors, they mimic distress. If so, they do it uncommonly well and are splendid imitators. But I will venture to say that nobody will ask for help so well as the man whose distress is real. He needs no one to teach him—starvation is his tutor. Take away his diffidence and give him enough courage, and his distress will make him eloquent! You may, by chance, have been accosted by a man who sought alms with awful eagerness—starvation looking out of his eyes—and speaking from his pinched countenance. He has held onto you with terrible vehemence and at last has said, “I have not eaten anything for many hours.”  
You can see by his very looks that it is true. And he adds, “I could bear to famish myself, but I have seven little children at home, and unless I take them bread they will be crying about me and, therefore, I do entreat you to help me.” Now, if all this is true and you look into the case and find it so, the man’s case speaks for itself and he is the man to move your heart. He does not need to go to a boarding school to learn elocution— need schools his tone—the words drop into their right places of themselves and, as to his gestures and postures, they are all apt and telling, though no teacher of rhetoric ever gave him a lesson. He will be sure to plead rightly, the suit lies heavy on his heart.  
Nobody prays before God like a man who feels his sins. He cries, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and says it as it ought to be said. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, some of us have to pray often in public, but we never pray so well as when we feel our needs—and the needs of the times and of the country—pressing urgently upon our hearts. You, yourselves, pray best when your own sense of sin and need most burden your souls. You are the men to pray, I say, you destitute people! You make the best of beggars, for you are most in need! You pray best who feel that you must have mercy or die! There is this to be said about the spiritual beggar—he is begging where he is permitted to beg.  
I remember being in Paris on a certain day in the year, I forget the name of the festival, and I was astonished at the immense number of beggars—and at their perseverance and daring. I had not observed them, before, in such swarms and such force, but I found that on one special day license was given to the poor, the lame, and the blind to persecute everybody for alms! I guarantee you they made good use of the permission and needed no pressing or inviting! Spiritual paupers! This day, even this day, is a day of Grace! A warrant has come from the King’s court that you may ask and it shall be given you! You may seek and you shall find! You may knock and it shall be opened unto you!  
Yes, every day is a Free-Grace Day! A festival for prayer! As long as you live and are in need, you have the King’s permit to open your mouth wide and He will fill it! You have His royal authority that you may come to His Mercy Seat and ask in every time of need right boldly for whatever you want! Well may the spiritual pauper take to a trade which is permitted by the King of Heaven! He is beggar by appointment to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty! Yes, more—spiritual begging is commanded by supreme authority—“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” It is the privilege of a sinner to be allowed to ask for Grace—it is also the duty of the sinner to seek mercy at the Savior’s hand!  
“Acquaint, now, yourself with Him and be at peace.” “Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” These are promises, but they are also precepts, precepts with the weight of commands! Oh, who that is poor will be slow to beg when the Lord of Love, Himself, commands him to ask? At the back of this there is an implied certainty. There is a sacred promise that he who asks shall surely receive, for God would not tantalize us by commanding us to pray if He had not, at the same time, intended to give.  
Let me further remind every spiritually destitute man here that he may pray with confidence, because begging has been the source of all the riches of the saints. Some of them are rolling in heavenly wealth, for all things are theirs! Their mouths are satisfied with good things and their hearts are filled with gladness. You may see their riches, for the joy of their countenances and the bliss of their daily work are visible to all. Do you not envy them, for they feed on Christ every day and have the Bread of Heaven always on their tables, and the Water of Life always flowing at their feet? Do you know how they became so rich? I will whisper it in your ear. They gained all they have by begging.  
“Not very creditable to them,” you say. No, but wonderfully creditable to HIM who gave them all they have! And they are accustomed to give all the honor and the glory to that dear and blessed, and generous Savior who has never denied them their requests. If the richest saint on earth were to take you into his spiritual mansion, he would say to you, “Do you see this treasure and that Covenant blessing, and yonder priceless gifts? I obtained all these by begging! I asked and I received. All that I have came to me in that way.” The Lord has said, “For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”

Now, since all the saints on earth have grown rich by begging, I recommend you poor, destitute souls to take to the business and you will find it the most remunerative one that ever you undertook! You cannot dig—do not be ashamed to beg. Your digging will dig your own grave, that is all you will do by your self-righteous efforts. But you will obtain Grace for the asking, pardon for the asking and Heaven for the asking! Who would not be a spiritual beggar when he may be thus enriched? One thing more I will say and leave this point—you may begin begging at once. You, who are poor in spirit, may begin begging right now!  
I could not start in some trades tomorrow morning—I would need the capital and should need to go to the wholesale traders and get what I needed to stock me in the trade. But a beggar needs neither stock nor capital to begin with—all his capital lies in his need of capital! He never makes a good beggar till he has nothing left, and then, when his clothes are rags and his shoes are old and worn out, and he himself looks sick and wan—then he is the man for his business! And you, Sinner, you need no preparations in order to ask for mercy! Nothing need be done in you, or for you, in order to prepare you for the mercy of Christ! You may come to Him just as you are. Tarry not to mend, or wash, or cleanse—come in your foulness! Come in your rags! Come in your loathsomeness!  
Come just as you are—the worse you are, the more room for the display of the wonders of Divine Grace!—  
*“Cast your guilty soul on Him,  
Find Him mighty to redeem.  
At His feet your burden lay,  
Look your doubts and cares away.  
Now by faith the Son embrace,  
Plead His promise, trust His Grace.”*  
Still, perhaps, there will be some here who say, “I do not feel in a fit state to ask for mercy.” My dear Friends, it is your unfitness that is your fitness! Your poverty fits you for alms, your sickness fits you for the physician, your being nothing fits you to have Christ made All in All to you! Your emptiness is all He wants, that He may fill it with all the fullness of His Grace! Take to begging—that is the way to be rich towards God.  
III. But now, thirdly, here is THE BEGGAR’S VERY NATURAL FEAR. He is afraid that the great King will despise his prayers, or will not regard them. And he is afraid of this, first, from the greatness and holiness of that God to whom he addresses himself. He is thrice holy—can He regard the cry of one who has been a drunk or a harlot? He is infinitely great and fills immensity—can He listen to the prayers of a poor little boy, or of a gray-headed old rebel, whose only inheritance is a place in the workhouse? Can He look on such an insignificant worm as I am, the creature of a day, whose non-existence would make no flaw in the universe—whose damnation would be no loss to Him?  
Can He look on worthless me? Infinite God and yet listen to my sigh? Eternal and yet catch my tears? Can it be? Beloved, many are a long while in distress of soul because they do not remember that there is a Mediator between God and man—the Man Christ Jesus. God is thus glorious, but He is not far from any of us, for there is One who is God and at the same time a Man like ourselves, even Jesus, who has compassion on the ignorant and on those that are out of the way. Stop, then, your fearing, for the gulf is bridged! You may approach the Lord, for Jesus has paved the way! The same fear takes another shape. Trembling souls are afraid that God can never look upon them in love because their prayer itself, is so unworthy of notice.  
“I should not wonder if God despised my prayer,” says one, “for my fellow men despise it. I should not like them to hear it, it is such a broken, disconnected affair. I could not expect my own parents to have patience with it! And when I get up from my knees I despise my own prayer and hardly dare think I have prayed. I feel I have tried and failed. I have only groaned because I could not groan and mourned because I could not mourn.” Ah, yes, but the Lord looks at the heart and He does not regard the eloquence nor the style of prayer after the manner of man. The Pharisee’s was a very fine prayer, I dare say, and very well delivered. The poor Publican’s prayer was a very poor affair by the side of it, and rather undelivered than delivered, for he would not so much as lift his eyes towards Heaven, but the Lord heard it and had mercy upon him!  
Go and groan before God, that is praying! Go and weep before Him, that is praying! You need not get the book down and turn up a liturgy! I do not know of one that would quite suit a sinner in utter destitution. Men seldom use book prayers when they come before God in real earnest. Forms will suffice for playing at praying, but when you come to real earnest work with God, you have to put your books away. And you have to plead with the Lord with the first words that fly forth from your soul like sparks from a piece of hot iron beaten with the hammer. When the heart boils and swells with grief, then prayers roll down from the soul like lava from Vesuvius, because it cannot help running over and burning its way! That is the way to pray! May God help us to pray out of our very souls— and then it matters not what form the prayer takes—it is beautiful before the Most High.  
“Yes,” says one, “but I am afraid my prayer may be disregarded, because my needs are so great. If a beggar in the street asks for a copper, he may get it. If he were even to venture to ask for silver, he might gain it. But if he asked for thousand pound notes he might stand a long time in the street corner before he would find one who would supply him. Now, Sir, my prayer is for great things—I need the Savior’s blood upon my conscience! I need the Holy Spirit, Himself, to renew my nature! I need the whole Godhead to come and bless me! I need Heaven, itself—nothing short of that will satisfy me—and how can I hope that such a great prayer as mine will be answered?”  
Ah, dear Soul, you are dealing with a great God, and a great Savior and great promises. Do not be afraid to ask for great things, rather be afraid of limiting the Holy One of Israel! Open your mouth wide and He will fill it! Ah, and I think I hear one exclaim, “He may well despise my prayer, for my faith is so weak! If I had more faith, I think, then, He would listen to me.” Well, but the Lord has never said anywhere that He despises little faith. Can you find a passage of Scripture in which He says, “I will trample on the bruised reed, and I will quench the smoking flax”? If you have ever read a passage of Scripture like that, I never have—the whole run of the Bible goes the other way. “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”  
It seems that the poor and the weak are the chief objects of His care, and are not, therefore, rejected. Suppose He bruised and crushed the mustard seed—where would be the tree that is to grow out of it? Suppose He despised the day of small things—where would the day of great things be? “Behold your King comes, meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.” And as He comes, the little children gather round Him and they say, “Hosanna!” Look, He does not rebuke them! Rather does He say, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength, because of Your enemies.” Now, your faith is like a little child— God will grant you full manhood eventually—but even now He does not despise your feebleness. He looks upon it with favor and He hears your prayers.  
Now, somewhere in this place there is a young man in the same condition as that in which I was found some 23 years ago. He has learned to weep in secret before God and pray for mercy. But he has not found it yet—and he is tempted to give it all up. Hearken, dear Brother, to this word—“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” Cry on and look to Jesus, and you shall find all your destitute soul needs! And one of these days you who have learned to pray shall learn to praise and bless the prayer-answering God who did not suffer the soul of the destitute to perish!  
The Lord visit you at this moment and give you peace!  
IV. Our last head is to be this—our text affords to the destitute beggar A MOST COMFORTABLE ASSURANCE. “He will regard the prayer of the destitute.” Now, Beloved, whatever is in Scripture we accept as the Infallible Truth of God. We dare not doubt when God speaks—if He says it is so, it is so. Others may doubt the Inspiration of Scripture, but we have not gone that length yet. Now, poor destitute Sinner, if you believe the Scripture to be Inspired, believe this passage—“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.”  
Now, there is something about this text I want you to notice, namely, that God, in order that destitute sinners should never doubt His willingness to hear their prayers, has left this on record with a very special note appended to it. I will read you the note, which is in the 18th verse. “This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.” You see the Lord not only said that He would regard the prayer of the destitute, but He added, “This shall be written,” because, when a poor soul is in doubt and fear, there is nothing like having it in black and white. God has said it, but, says He, they shall not merely go by their ears, they shall see with their eyes.  
“This shall be written.” Look at it. There it stands before you, written by the pen of Inspiration, no doubt about it. “This shall be written for the generation to come,” that is, for you! It was not merely true in David’s time, or in Hezekiah’s time, but this shall be written for the generation to come—written for you and for your children—that God will hear the prayer of the destitute! Blessed be His name for that! I recommend, the next time you kneel down to pray, to put your finger on this verse and say, “Lord, I have Your Word for it. No, more—I have your writing for it. Behold I put it to You—You have said, ‘This shall be written.’ O fulfill this written pledge to me!”

When a man brings my own handwriting to me and says, “You promised me, and there is the writing,” I cannot get away from it. And how shall the Lord draw back from what He has said, “This shall be written for the generation to come”? Oh, it must stand true! Be of good courage, poor seeking Sinner, God will hear you! Remember, too, that when the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, He used to choose for His associates the destitute. “This man receives sinners,” they said, “and eats with them.” “Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” He would sometimes sit in the house of the Pharisee, but while He was there His heart was after the poor woman that came behind Him and washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head—for His heart was always with needy sinners.  
Upon the self-righteous He looked with an eye of indignation. “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees,” He said—but to poor guilty sinners He always looked with eyes of tenderness. He was ready and glad to receive them. In fact, it was His life’s work to seek and to save that which was lost! Do not be afraid to come, then! Jesus has made a feast and has not called in His rich friends nor acquaintances—He has brought in the poor, the lame and the blind—for they cannot repay Him, but will forever love Him! And such are you. Come, and welcome! Come, and welcome! Jesus cast out none when He was here—He will cast out none that come to Him now.  
Remember, in the matter of praying, that God loves to hear sinners pray. We may be quite sure of that, because He teaches them how to pray. There are passages in Scripture where God even puts the words into sinners’ mouths. He says, “Take with you words, and say unto Him, ‘Receive us graciously, and love us freely, so will we render the calves of our lips.’ ” God must be very fond of prayer when He teaches us how to pray! Do not be afraid, therefore, to pour out those broken sentences which God the Holy Spirit has taught you. He has never despised a sinner’s prayer yet! Search and look down the chronicles of His Word and see what sinner He ever rejected. Look round among your kinsfolk and acquaintance, and find out one who ever fled to Him for mercy and was repulsed!  
I appeal to those who are saved on earth and they will tell you that it was infinite love and mercy that accepted them. If I could appeal to the white-robed hosts in Heaven, they would all tell you that, like yourselves, they were destitute. They had to come in forma pauperis before the Lord and He did not despise them, nor disregard their prayers. I wish I could take a poor trembler by the hand and say, “Dear Brother, come with me.” Gladly would I do it! I have a hope of Heaven this morning and I will tell you what it is. I am as destitute, this day, of all righteousness of my own as anyone here can be! My eyes are fixed upon the Lord Jesus on the accursed tree. There He is, my Substitute, and I trust in Him and in Him, alone.  
Now, if you are enabled by the Spirit of God to look right away from yourself and your misery to Christ Jesus, the sinner’s Savior, you shall have, this very morning, the peace of God which passes all understanding to keep your heart and mind—and you shall know that you are saved! I am going to close with a remark upon another subject. You will have noticed, I dare say, that the whole of this verse is connected with the building up of Zion. Therefore there must be some connection between the two—and it is just this—the Church of God must never expect to see great revivals, nor to see the world converted to Christ till she comes before the Lord as destitute!  
I am afraid that when we plead the most with God, we still feel we are a very respectable community of Christians with a large number of ministers and a number of wealthy laymen, a large amount of Chapel property and a good deal of power and influence. You say, “I am rich and increased in goods.” It may be that all this is the sign of your poverty—and we may be naked, and poor, and miserable. But when we get right down and feel we are nothing and nobody—and we could not save a soul if our lives depended upon it. When we know, by His Grace, that we are weak as water and must come to God as utterly impotent apart from the power of the Spirit of God—then will the Lord appear in His Glory! And then His destitute Church shall become rich in His riches, strong in His strength, and victorious in His might!  
We must be brought down! I see among the various denominations too much emulation as to their position. We stand in this position and they in the other, and the voluntaries are doing such wonders. But, Brothers and Sisters, we are just a lot of poor unworthy sinners who owe everything we have to the Sovereign Grace of God! And what we are to do for God must be accomplished, not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit! When we feel this, the building of Zion will come, and not till then. The Lord send it!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 102.  
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GRATITUDE FOR GREAT DELIVERANCES  
NO. 3113

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1908.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 29, 1874.

**“For He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from Heaven did the LORD behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.” Psalm 102:19-22.**

I SUPPOSE the first sense of this passage would be just this. Israel had been carried away captive and only the poorest of the people had been left in the land. Jerusalem was a heap. Zion had been plowed with the plow of desolation. The whole country was, compared with its former state, like a desert. But in due time, God, who had peculiar favor towards His people, though He had sorely smitten them, would look down upon them. From the height of His sanctuary in Heaven, He would look down upon the ruins of His sanctuary on earth. From His heavenly city above, He would look down upon His earthly city below. And as He looked and listened, He would be attracted by the moans of His people, and especially of some who were appointed to death, or, as the margin renders it, “the children of death.” Upon these He would look with tender pity and, in due time He would so come to the deliverance of His scattered people, Israel, and bring them back to their own land and work for them such wonderful mercy that, ever afterwards that deliverance would be spoken of with praise and thanksgiving! Even in the last days when all nations shall serve the Lord, the memory of this deliverance shall not be forgotten! Still shall it be the theme of joyous song and the subject of holy contemplation, just as when Israel was in Egypt, the Lord heard their groaning and with a high hand and a stretched-out arm brought them up out of the land of bondage—and ever afterwards among the sweetest patriotic songs of the nation was the one which Moses and Miriam sang on the further shore of the Red Sea—“Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” And all along Jewish history, whatever of her songs there may have been, that one has never gone into oblivion. And even in Heaven, itself, “they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” So that the deliverance promised here to Israel was to be as noteworthy as that which was given at the Red Sea and it was to be forever kept in memory by the Lord’s chosen people!

Now I am going to leave the more immediate sense of our text, yet still give you its meaning. It has been said that if a great crystal is broken into the smallest fragments, each piece will still be crystallized in the same form and, in like manner, the dealings of God with His Church, as a whole, will be found to be of the same kind as His dealings with the various parts of His Church and also with individuals. And in dealing with individuals, each separate act of God will have about it the same attributes and be of the same character as His dealings on a large scale with the whole of His people. So, if we break down the great Truth of the text, which is like a mass of bread, into small crumbs so that each one of the Lord’s children may have a portion, it will still be bread! The Truth of God will be the same as we try to bring it home to individual experience—and that we shall now try to do. May the eternal Spirit, the Comforter, help us in the doing of it!

I. And first, dear Friends, our text speaks of MISERY AT ITS EXTREME.  
You observe that it speaks of prisoners who are groaning and of those who are appointed unto death—who are evidently in chains because they are spoken of as being loosed. It has been well said that one half of the people in the world do not know how the other half lives, and it is certainly true that there are sorrows in this world of which some of us have no conception or imagination! Complaint was made, some time ago, by a hearer in a certain place of worship, that most of the sermons that he heard there were composed upon the principle that everybody was happy—and it did not appear to him that the preacher had much, if any sympathy with those who were of a sorrowful spirit, like Hannah, [See

Sermon #1515, Volume 26—A WOMAN OF A SORROWFUL SPIRIT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] or those who were in an

afflicted and depressed condition who could not rejoice as he could. I do not think that charge could be truthfully brought against me. If it could, I would be sorry, for where the Spirit of God rests upon any man at all after the manner in which it rested upon Christ, that man will repeat, in his measure, what his Lord could say in the fullest possible sense, “He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,

 [See Sermon #1604, Volume 27—HEART

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http://www.spurgeongems.org.] to preach deliverance to the captives, [See Sermon  
#2371, Volume 40—FREEDOM AT ONCE AND FOREVER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty they who are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” The ministry that God sends, though it will be a ministry of warning and threats to the ungodly, will be a ministry of consolation to those who are sorrowing over their sins and seeking Divine deliverance from them! So you who are the sons and daughters of joy will pardon me if there should seem to be less than usual for you in my present discourse. When someone is sick, nobody blames the physician for giving his main attention to the invalid of the house, nor finds fault with the nurse for her assiduous attentions to the poor suffering one. There are many sorrows, Brothers and Sisters, in this world, and there are many sorrows even in the Church of God! And yet, for my part, I see much for which I can thank God, especially when I look upon the people of God. Then I say, with Moses, “Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” Yet there are still many sons and daughters of affliction and there are many trials and tribulations for each of us to pass through before we reach that land where sorrow is unknown.

There are some sad souls who are comparable to prisoners, prisoners that groan most mournfully. And there are some who are convinced of sin, but who have not yet found the Savior—and some who, having found that Savior, have fallen into doubts and fears, or who have backslidden from Him and so lost their comforting assurances. And they are now crying, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” There are also some who have experienced heavy losses and are bearing heavy crosses—some who have seen the desire of their eyes taken away with a stroke, some to whom the shafts of death have flown once, twice, thrice—each time smiting down a beloved one. There are some very dear children of God who do not always see the light of His Countenance—precious sons of God who are like fruit brought forth by the moon—those who are the bruised spices of the sanctuary all the sweeter for being bruised and just now is the time of their sorrow, when they are prisoners that cry and sigh and groan by reason of their hard bondage.

A prisoner is often a solitary man. Yet much of the sorrow of imprisonment lies in separation from friends and in utter loneliness. Perhaps I am addressing some whose condition is that of extreme solitude. You are alone in the streets of this great wilderness of a city and there is no such loneliness as that! Or you live in a house where you wish that you could be alone in one sense, for you are sadly alone in another sense, for nobody seems to understand your case, or to enter into your experience. You wear a fetter which never fretted human wrists before—at least so you think. You are in solitary confinement and in that confinement you are in the dark. The light in which you once rejoiced has gone from you. The joyous flow of spirits and the cheery countenance which you used to possess have departed from you. Your heart is troubled and you are vexed with inward doubts and fears. It is a sorrowful case when a man is in that condition and is alone in it.

It may be, also, that you feel as if you were jailed. The power to act, which you once had, has gone from you. Your former energy has departed. You are like a man spellbound. Just as sometimes, in troubled dreams, a man tries to run but cannot even lift a foot, or seeks to grasp something, but his hands seems turned to stone, so is it with you—or so, at any rate, has it been with some of us! We were chained and in the dark, and solitary. And we have tried hard to convince ourselves of the truth of what people said to us—that it was only a matter of nerves and that we must be energetic and make up our minds to get out of that state—which is what only fools say, for wise men know that such talk as this is like pouring vinegar into open wounds, making them smart still more and never producing any healing effects! You have, perhaps, been like a prisoner who has well-near escaped, but who has been detected by the ever-watchful guards and so had to go back to his cell and to wear double chains for trying to escape! And, possibly, your imprisonment has lasted long. Some of you young people may feel frightened when you hear me talk like this. Do not be alarmed, yet lay up in your memories what I am saying, because if these dark days never come to you, you will be all the more thankful that they do not! But if they do, you will remember that I told you about them. You will then say, “This is no strange thing that has happened to us, for the preacher said it might be so, and the preacher was a man of a cheery spirits yet he said it might be so with us. As it now is so, we need not be surprised and we may know that we may be the children of God and that God may be looking down from Heaven in pity upon us—and resolving to set us free—and yet for the present we are fettered and unable to escape from our prison.”

Now observe that according to the text, there are some who are in a worse plight even than prisoners, for they are “appointed to death”—some who feel in their bodies that they will soon die, but who have not yet learned to exult in that fact. They have not looked at the heavenward side of it and said, “Ah, we shall soon be where we shall shake off every infirmity and sickness, and see our Savior face to face and praise Him without sinning forever!” But they have said, “We are appointed to death. We have sharp pains to undergo and the dying strife to endure when the clammy sweat will thicken upon our brow.” And as yet, that is all that they have thought of, or, at least they think most of that. If there are any such people here, I pray God to now give them the comfort which they so sorely need—that they may even rejoice in the prospect of departing to be with that dear Lord whom they have so long loved and served! And, alas, there are some who are “appointed to death” in a far worse sense than that for “to die is gain” to us who are believers in Christ, but the ungodly feel that they are “appointed to death” in a much more terrible meaning of the word, “death!”

Their sins are standing out before them and crying out against them! They feel like a murderer who is standing under the gallows—they are afraid that the floor will fall from beneath their feet and that they will sink down to destruction! They have not yet learned the power of the precious blood of Jesus and they have not yet heard the voice of God saying to them, “Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you for Christ’s sake.” They are under conviction of sin and under that conviction they feel that they are “appointed to death” eternal—their own conscience affirms that the Divine sentence is a just one and they dare not argue with it. Such is their own sense of their condition in the sight of God that if they had to judge themselves, they would have to condemn themselves! And, perhaps, meanwhile, Satan is reminding them of the wrath to come and making them feel how certain it is that it will be their portion. They also believe themselves to be “appointed to death” because even their fellows seem to shun them. Christian people appear to have given them up as hopeless. Their old companions look upon them as though they were too far gone for the mercy of God to reach them. If there should be one such sinner in this building, I am right glad of it, for it is to him and to those like he that this text is especially sent! The Lord is, at this moment, looking down from Heaven with those piercing eyes of His which can discern the exact condition of all hearts here—and those eyes of His are gazing with Infinite pity upon the groaning prisoners who are “appointed to death.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, there are some of us who are neither prisoners nor “appointed to death.” Let us bless the Lord who has set us free and given us eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ! But let us not forget what we used to be, nor forget those who are still in bonds and under sentence of death. Let us pray the Lord to bless them and to bring them out into liberty and joy this very hour! Whenever I meet with a poor enslaved, sin-sick soul, I say, “Ah, my Friend! I can pity you. I still have the scars upon my soul where the iron fetters used to hold me fast—and the bitterness of heart that I then experienced makes me always feel a tender, loving sympathy with the weak ones among God’s people and the tried ones among His saints.” Those who are pushed about by many as though they were not fit to live are the very ones for whom I would gladly make a way and bring them to the softest place and say, “Be of good comfort, for it is for you and such as you that God has sent His Son and His Spirit into the world.”

II. Now, secondly, in our text we notice MISERY OBSERVED. I want you carefully to note these words, “For the Lord has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from Heaven did the Lord behold the earth to hear the groaning of the prisoner.” This expression is, of course, not strictly applicable to God, for He sees all things. But, speaking after the manner of men, it describes Him as going up to the highest part of Heaven, as a watchman goes up to the top of the tower, where the widest range of vision can be obtained and looks over sea and land with keen and searching eyes. The original appears to mean, “The Lord leans from the height of His sanctuary,” as if He bent down over the battlements of Heaven in order to get nearer to the object of His search and to gaze the more intently at it. And as He looks and listens, His eyes and ears are riveted upon a prison through whose dreary, grated window He sees what others cannot—a pining prisoner—and He hears a moan which others cannot bear to hear. And far off, yonder, in the place of shame and death, He sees poor wretches taken out to die. And all His heart goes out in pity towards them. We naturally look for some pleasing sight—we like to let our eyes rest upon that beautiful lake in the distance, or that forest browning with the tints of autumn, or that green hill, or that sky checkered with a thousand hues as the sun is setting. But here is the great God looking out for miserable objects, keenly observing those who are the most miserable of men and women! We like to have our ears charmed by the sweet sounds of melody and harmony, but God opens His ears to catch the sound of a moan or a groan, and turns His eyes, not to search for a diamond, but to look for a tear! O wondrous mercy of God! How strange that the King of kings should go to the top of His castle to look for a poor wretched soul!

And yet, dear Friends, after this manner do the benevolent of the earth, who are most like their God, act. See the man whose duty it is to watch the coast—observe him going up and down the seashore and the cliffs, walking to and fro with his telescope under his arm. There is a pleasure yacht yonder, but he does not especially notice that. There is a steamer plowing the deep, but he does not notice that. Here are little rowing or sailing boats flitting about, but he does not notice them. Now it is night and presently a rocket flies up into the air. Ah, he is all attention now! There is another rocket. He calls his fellows and soon they will be off with the lifeboat in answer to the signals of distress at sea! Just so is it with God—He is looking for signals of distress. Some of you are bent on pleasure, but He does not take special note of you. Some of you are full of pride, you are rich and increased in goods, you have all your canvas spread and all your flags flying—but the Lord does not notice you except in sorrow and anger! But if there is a signal of distress anywhere about, or a poor anxious soul is crying, “O God, have mercy upon me,” or one that cannot get as far as that, but whose moan is too suffocating to become an articulate prayer, (for that is what is implied in the word, groaning, here), God is sure to notice that, to hear the groaning and mark the falling tear of the penitent!  
To my mind it is very wonderful that while God is Omniscient and so sees everything, there should be some special objects of His Omniscient regard. Think for a moment what concentrated Omniscience must be— each individual as closely looked upon by God as if there were not another person for Him to look upon—as if he were as much the sole object of the thought of the Most High as if He had forgotten the whole universe besides! That is really the purport of what we are here taught. God is reading you through and through, poor Soul—watching you as if He had nobody else to watch, understanding you as fully as if there were nobody else to be understood—leaning over you that He may get the better view of you, bringing all His Infinite faculties to bear upon your case, searching it from top to bottom—the origin of your sorrow, the ramifications of your grief, planning the outcome of the whole matter, what balms and what catholicons you need to heal your wounds and charm away your distresses! Why, it is really worthwhile to be a prisoner to have God looking upon one like this! It is worthwhile to feel the sentence of death in one’s soul in order to know, by the testimony of Inspiration, that God is looking upon one out of Heaven in this special and peculiar sense! He can never forget His children anywhere, but if there is one place where He remembers them more specially than anywhere else, it is in the place of their sorrow!  
I wonder whether you, good mother, have been especially thinking of anyone at home while I have been preaching? I should not wonder if it is so and I can guess which member of your family you have thought of more than of all the rest! Of course you have been thinking of the little one whom you left so ill. You were scarcely sure whether you might venture to steal out this evening, but you said, “I think I must go and bow before the Lord in His House.” And while you have been here, you have been wondering whether the nurse has been properly caring for your sick child. Why have you not been concerned about your big boy, John, who is away at school, or about your daughter, Mary, who is well and strong? Ah, no, you have been able to keep your thoughts away from them, but you could not keep your thoughts away from the little sick one. Now, like as a father and a mother of a family pity their children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him—and He especially pities His poor tried and troubled ones.  
III. Thirdly, keeping to the same strain, we see MISERY RELIEVED.  
God looks down from Heaven to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those that are appointed to death. God’s thoughts do not end in thoughts, nor do His words end in words. David wrote truly, “How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God!” So they are, but how precious also must His actions be! Our text is one of many proofs that God does really hear prayer. My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I would be greatly grieved if any of you were moved in the slightest degree by the assertion that is made, in these evil days, that our prayers are really not heard by God. The persons who make that assertion do not know anything at all about the matter, for they do not themselves pray to God, so what can they know about it? If I were to contradict one of these philosophers concerning certain natural phenomena which I have never observed, he would at once say that I was out of court! If I said that I did not believe in the result which he said he had attained, he would say, “But I have proved it and, therefore, I am able to speak positively concerning it.” If I were to say, “I have not tried it and so do not believe it,” he would say to me, “Negative evidence is of no use in such a case as this.” I cannot help using this simple illustration, which I have used before, concerning a man who was charged with theft. They brought five persons to prove that he stole the goods, and they all saw him do it, “but,” he said, “that is nothing! I can bring 50 people who did not see me steal the goods.” Just so. But the magistrate knew that there was not anything in the evidence of the 50 people who did not see the theft—the evidence of the five people who did see it was much stronger! So if there is but a very small number of us who have really proved the power of prayer and who know that we have obtained answers to our petitions, the evidence of the small number who have tested the matter is worth far more than the evidence of any number who have not tried it and who, therefore, cannot say anything about it! Some of us have been to God about great things and little things, temporal things and spiritual things—we are in the habit of going to Him all day long! There is scarcely an hour in the day in which we do not ask Him for something or other— and for us to receive answers to our prayers is as common a thing for us as breathing the air, or seeking the sunshine by day or the stars by night! It has become such an ordinary, common occurrence with us that we cannot doubt it.  
Our text also reminds us that God hears the very poorest prayers, those which are the poorest in the judgment of men—the groaning of the prisoners. I do not think them the poorest prayers—I consider that they are really the most powerful prayers. The prayers of the heart are often the most prevalent with God when they cannot be expressed in words, for the weight of meaning would break the backs of the words and human language would stagger beneath the crushing load. Then it is that we often pray best of all. If a man gets up from his knees and groans, and says, “I cannot pray,” he need not fret about not finding suitable words, for he has prayed! But our wordy prayers, whether in our private devotions or in public Prayer Meetings, are often so much chaff and nothing more. God does not need our words, yet we sometimes string them together as if we were displaying our oratory before the Eternal. This must not be! God loves the heart of the suppliant to be poured out before Him. The best prayer is when a man can take his heart and turn it bottom upwards and let all that is in it run out! That is the style of praying that has most influence with God.  
He does “hear the groaning of the prisoner” and with God, to hear means to answer. We need not say, as many do, that “He is a prayerhearing and prayer-answering God,” for prayer-hearing involves prayeranswering! O mourners, still mourn before your God, but mourn with this mixture of hope—that God will not suffer the groaning that arises from your heart, in the name of Jesus, to be like the mere whisperings of the wind! He will hear them before long.  
It is also said, in our text, that the Lord will “loose those that are appointed to death.” Is it not wonderful that God should deliver men just when it seems as if all is over with them? I remember lying in the condemned cell—I mean spiritually. I thought I heard the bell tolling out my doom and I expected to soon be taken away to execution! But it was just then that God came and loosed my bonds. I had tugged hard at them, trying to untie the knots that Moses had tied and seeing if I could break the iron fetters of conviction and condemnation which were riveted upon me, but I could not. But the sight of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and the Omnipotent might of His atoning Sacrifice broke every bond from off my soul in a single moment and I leaped into ecstatic liberty! And this is how God will deal with every soul that will but turn to Jesus on the Cross and leave itself in the hands of Infinite Love! Sinner, even if you are on the very verge of Hell, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He will loose your bonds and set you at liberty! Even though your death warrant seems to be signed and sealed, the prey shall be taken from the mighty and the lawful captive shall be delivered, for the Lord, your Redeemer, is almighty and none can withstand Him when He resolves to bring up His children even from their prisons! Only trust in Jesus! Rest your soul upon Him and God will yet come to your deliverance!  
IV. The last thing in our text is ELOQUENT GRATITUDE. “To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.”  
One of the most powerful preachers who ever lived was the Prophet Jonah. And I believe that Jonah learned to preach by going, in the whale’s belly, to the bottom of the Mediterranean. That voyage was better than a university education for him and he became a good sound Calvinist before he was cast up again upon the land. He said, “Salvation is of the Lord,” before the Lord told the fish to give him up and I have no doubt that he often preached that doctrine afterwards! And if some preachers whom I know, instead of having lessons in elocution, were sent for a little while down into the depths of soul-despair. If they were tried, plagued, vexed and chastened every morning, they would learn a way of speaking which would reach the people’s hearts far better than any that can be learned by human teaching!

We need, dear Brothers, if we are to speak aright for God, to know something of our soul’s need, the depths of it, and then something of the Grace of God and the height of it in bringing us out of our distresses! Hence, according to our text, those who are set free declare or publish the name of the Lord. You cannot keep a man quiet if he has been, spiritually, in prison and has been brought out by God! If he has been condemned to die and has had his sentence canceled at the last moment, you cannot make him hold his tongue! You may tell him that he must keep his religion to himself, but it is impossible. He is so overjoyed about it—it has so charmed him that he must begin to tell somebody about it! You know that John Bunyan said that he wanted to tell the crows on the plowed land all about his conversion. It seems quite natural that he should feel like that and he did tell a great many besides the crows about it! There is something in a man who gets joy and peace in believing that will not be quiet. Perhaps some of you have been very ill and a certain medicine has been recommended to you and it has restored you. Now, do you not always feel, when you meet anybody who is ill as you were, that you must tell him about the remedy that cured you? You say, “You should try so-and-so! Look what it has done for me.” Why do you need to tell him? You do not know why! You do not claim any very great measure of benevolence for doing it, for you cannot help communicating the good news to others. So is it with the man who is really saved by the Grace of God! He needs to communicate it and he is the fit man to communicate it because he who speaks from the heart speaks to the heart and he who speaks experimentally is the man by whom the Holy Spirit is most likely to speak to those who are in a similar experience. Perhaps, my dear Friends, some of you are now suffering on purpose that God may afterwards fit you the better to speak to others in a similar case—I believe it is often so and trust that it may turn out to be so in your case.  
These people declared the goodness of God among the saints. So ought we to do. Some Christians cannot tell their experience very readily, but I think they should try to do so. Tell your Brothers and Sisters in Christ what the Lord has done for you. If there were more commerce among Christians with their experience, they would be mutually the more enriched. But these people also declared the name of the Lord among the nations when they were gathered together. And Soul, if God has allowed you to go down into the deeps of the prison and to lie in the condemned cell—and has brought you out to life and liberty—you will surely not blush to tell all what great things God has done for you! I think you must sometimes feel in your heart as if you wished you had a whole universe for an audience—the devils in Hell and the angels in Heaven, the saints above and the saints below—and the sinners, too, and you would like to say to them, “I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.” You cannot have quite so large an audience as that just yet, so, meanwhile, make use of the audience you can have and—  
*“Tell to sinners round  
What a dear Savior you have found!”*  
It is in part for this purpose that this great blessing has been given to you that you might tell all you can about it to others. I pray you not to rob God of the revenue of Glory which His Grace deserves at your hands!  
Brothers and Sisters, the gist of what I have said to you is just this— Are we rejoicing in the Lord? Then let us turn our joy into praise of Him! Are we very much cast down? Then let us look up to Him who looks down upon us and let us rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, for He will yet bring us out of our prison! Are we as yet unsaved? Then let us catch at those words in the text that tell us that God looks down from Heaven “to hear the groaning of the prisoner.” Will you not groan, poor prisoner? The devil tempted you never to do so any more. You yourself said, “It is no use. I have been to the Tabernacle so long and I have been to other places of worship, but I cannot get any comfort. I will give up trying.” Oh, do not do so, I pray you!  
Have you come to the end of yourself? Well, then, now you have come to the beginning of God! It is when the last penny of creature merit is gone that God comes to us with the boundless treasures of His Grace! If you have one moldy crust of your own homemade bread left, you shall not have the Bread of Heaven! But when you are starved. When you have no goodness in you—nor any hope of goodness, no merit, nor hope of merit, no reliance, nor shadow of reliance upon anything that you are, or ever can be—then is the time to cast yourself upon the all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ Jesus! Everything that you can spin, God will unravel! Everything that you can do for yourself, He will throw down! Your spider webs He will break! You think to spin them into silken robes, but He will strip you and He will slay you, for it is written, “I wound and I heal. I kill and I make alive.” Blessed is the man who is wounded by God, for He will afterwards heal him! Blessed is the man who is slain by God in this sense, for He will make him alive! Blessed is the man who is empty, for God will fill him! That was the theme of the Virgin’s song and let it be ours as I close my discourse—“He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty. He has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.” So may He do now, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 102.**

Verses 1, 2. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto You. Hide not Your face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline Your ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily. Sincere suppliants are not content with praying for praying’s sake. They desire to really reach the ear and heart of Jehovah. “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto You.” When prayer is intensified into a cry, then the heart is even more urgent to have audience of the Lord.

3-7. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. The Psalmist gives us here a very graphic description of his sorrowful condition at that time. He was moved to grief by a view of the national calamities of the chosen people and these so worked upon his patriotic soul that he was wasted with anxiety, his spirits were dried up and his very life was ready to expire.

8. My enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. Their rage was unrelenting and unceasing and vented itself in taunts and insults. With his inward sorrows and outward persecutions, the Psalmist was in as ill a plight as may well be conceived!

9-11. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping because of Your indignation and Your wrath: for You have lifted me up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declines; and I am withered like grass. This is a telling description of all-saturating, allembittering sadness. And that was the portion of one of the best of men, and that for no fault of his own, but because of his love to the Lord’s people.

12. But You, O LORD, shall endure forever; and Your remembrance unto all generations. All other things are vanishing like smoke and withering like grass. But, overall, the one eternal, Immutable Light shines on, and will shine on when all these shadows have declined into nothingness.

13,14. You shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yes, the set time is come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. [See Sermon #2576, Volume 44—ZION’S

PROSPERITY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

They delight in her so greatly that even her rubbish is dear to them. It was a good omen for Jerusalem when the captives began to feel a homesickness and began to sigh after her.

15-17. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your Glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not

despise their prayer. [See Sermon #1141, Volume 19—GOOD NEWS FOR THE DESTITUTE— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He will not  
treat their pleas with contempt. He will incline His ears to hear, His heart to consider and His hands to help.

18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD. A note shall be made of it, for there will be destitute ones in future generations—“the poor shall never cease out of the land”—and it will make glad their eyes to read the story of the Lord’s mercy to the needy in former times.

19-23. For He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from Heaven did the LORD behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD. He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. Here the Psalmist comes down again to the mournful string and pours forth his personal complaint.

24-27. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Your years are throughout all generations. Of old have You laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure: yes, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall have no end. God always lives on. No decay can happen to Him, nor destruction overtake Him. O my Soul, rejoice you in the Lord always, since He is always the same!

28. The children of Your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You.  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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OWL OR EAGLE?  
NO. 2860

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 10, 1872.

**“I am like an owl of the desert.”  
Psalm 102:6.**

**“Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”  
Psalm 103:5.**

IN the 102nd Psalm, the Believer likens himself to an owl, and in the 103rd Psalm, in almost the parallel verse, he is compared to an eagle. What a blessing it is that the saints of God, in the olden times, were moved by the Holy Spirit to write down their experiences. And what a mercy it is that they wrote them out so fully! They have not given us miniatures so much as full-length portraits. Especially was this the case with David—again and again he draws himself to the very life. Possibly, if left to himself, he would have omitted from his autobiography some of his faults and failings, as well as the grosser sins of his life, but he was under the guidance of the Spirit of God and, therefore, he has shown us his true self—infirmities, iniquities and all that he was! It is related of Oliver Cromwell that when his portrait was about to be painted by an eminent artist, the painter desired to conceal the wart upon the Protector’s face, but the true hero said, “Paint me just as I am, wart and all.” In a similar style, David, the champion and hero of Israel, in the portrait of himself, painted by himself, shows us his scars and warts, his blemishes and imperfections.

This, I say again, is a great mercy because if it were not for this fact, we might have supposed that these gracious men of the olden time were not subject to the same infirmities as ourselves. And we might have concluded that we were not the Lord’s people, “for, surely,” we would have said, “God’s true people never wandered as we wander, never failed as we fail, were never downcast as we are and were never on the borders of despair as we sometimes are.” But we turn to this blessed Book and we find that the saints of God described in it were very much like the saints of the present time. The sea of life is rough to us and it was rough to them. Their vessels leaked, then, and ours leak now. The winds sometimes blow a hurricane just as they did, then, and spiritual navigation was, in their day, very much what it is today. This must always be a cause of consolation to us and also a means of direction, for, seeing that they fought and struggled as we do, we can examine their methods to discover how they gained their victories. And, having the same sort of enemies to deal with and the same Divine assistance at our disposal, we flee for help and strength where they fled and use the same means which they used so well in overcoming their adversaries. If God had changed, that would have altered matters for us, but, since He is still the same and deals with His children after the same rule of Grace, we are both comforted and instructed as we read how He delivered His ancient people. I hope it may be so while we are meditating upon our two texts.

Observe, first, that the saints of God have differed, the one from the other. Some think that these two Psalms are by different authors, yet one of them says, “I am like an owl of the desert,” while the other says, “My youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” But, as I believe that these Psalms were both written by the same person, I see another line of thought, which is that the saints of God have, at times, differed from themselves. Extremes have met in them. They have been like an owl one day and like an eagle another day. We shall close our meditations by observing that the Lord alone can change the sadness of His people into gladness and make the owl of the desert into the eagle that soars aloft on mighty wings.

I. To begin, then, The SAINTS OF GOD HAVE DIFFERED, THE ONE FROM THE OTHER. One mournfully hoots, “I am like an owl of the desert.” Another, stretching his broad wings, cries, as he mounts towards Heaven, “My youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

This may be accounted for in various ways. Something may be set down to the different times in which men have lived. David, on the whole, lived in times in which the Church of God prospered. Some think that the 102nd Psalm was written by Nehemiah, or by Daniel, who lived in more troublous times, when the House of God lay waste and Israel was carried into captivity. The children of God usually sympathize very much with the condition of things by which they are surrounded. When there are revivals, they are cheered. And when there is a long season of declension, they feel humbled and brought low. We do not expect that the age of Jeremiah should bring forth many rejoicing saints. Neither, on the other hand, should we expect that the days in which the Lord magnified His name through His servant, David, should bring forth a majority of mournful saints. Much will, therefore, depend upon the times in which God’s people live—yet not as much as some would think. There have always been some who have blessed the name of the Lord when they have been the only godly persons in the district. They have shone like stars of the first magnitude amidst the thick darkness of the night that reigned around them. While there have been others who, even in times of refreshing, have cried out, “My leanness, my leanness!”

Something must also be set down to the various works in which different men have been engaged for the Lord. Some of God’s servants must be of a joyful disposition, or they would never get through the heavy work that is appointed to them. Others, who have the heavy task of rebuking incorrigible sinners and threatening God’s judgments upon them, are naturally of a somewhat gloomy cast of mind. They would not be fitted for their stern work if they were not, themselves, stern. I have no doubt that those wonderful sermons of John Bunyan, when he “preached in chains to men in chains,” were the more powerful because there was a sympathy in the sorrow of his heart with those who were themselves in sorrow through their sin. God may be as much glorified by a weeping Jeremiah as by an eagle-winged Ezekiel!

The trials of God’s people also differ. All of them feel the weight of His rod, but they do not all feel it alike. There are some Believers whose path is comparatively smooth. In temporal things they are well provided for. They have good bodily health, the members of their family are spared to them, they seem to travel along a very easy way to Heaven. But there are others to whom the getting to Glory is like crossing the Atlantic in a storm! They have wave upon wave—all God’s billows sometimes seem to go over them. Divine Wisdom arranges our lot, but our lots are not precisely alike. I do not doubt that there is a more equal distribution of happiness than we sometimes dream. Still, there are differences and those differences are very conspicuous, here and there, among Christians.

Still, I think a great deal more is to be set down to constitutional temperament than to any of these outside things. I know some of my dear Brothers and Sisters who, if they were very poor, would still be happy. Indeed, I have seen them very sick and ill, but they have still been joyful! I have gone with them to the graveside, but they have rejoiced in the Lord even there. They could not help doing so—there seemed to be a fountain of joy in them, like water in a well that springs up continually! On the other hand, there are some brethren—I will not say that there are many, here—still, there are some who could not help grumbling wherever they might be! If they had the fat of the land upon their table, it would not quite suit their appetite—they would prefer a mixture of bitter herbs! I believe that there are some Christians whom God Himself will never satisfy until He takes them to Heaven. They seem to have a soul that utterly disdains to be content and shows its greatness, I suppose, in continually feeling that nothing is quite good enough for it. That is a dreadful constitution for any man to have! Perhaps it is his liver that is wrong, or, more likely his heart, but there is no doubt whatever that physical disease has a great effect upon constitutional temperament. And some sad folk are rather to be pitied than to be blamed for the dark and somber view which they take of everything around them.

I incline to think, however, that we must not lay too much stress upon such things as these, but that the main difference will be discovered in another direction. Some saints have more faith than others have—and very much in proportion to their faith will be their condition of heart and mind! Such saints, having more faith than others have, will also have more zeal for God, more conscientious observance of His commands, more complete devotion to His will, more self-denying consecration to His service—and where there is much of all these things, there will be more joy than there can be in any other condition of heart and life! If you are a true Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet are slack in serving God, you shall get to Heaven but you shall have very little Heaven on the way there. But if your faith rests, like a trustful child, upon the Omnipotence and Immutability of God. If you simply and implicitly rely upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ and then, out of love to your Lord, are fired with a sacred devotion to be used to Christ’s Glory, your peace shall be as a river and your righteousness as the waves of the sea! God, in His all-wise Sovereignty, may send you various trials which will cast you down, but it is according to the gracious rule of His Kingdom to give the sweet reward of His Presence to His obedient children. He says to us, as He did to His ancient people, “If you will walk contrary unto Me, then will I also walk contrary unto you.” But if you walk with God as Enoch did, you shall have the joy which doubtless beamed from Enoch’s face, beaming also from yours!

The practical lesson of this first part of my subject is this. Do not judge yourself, dear Brother or Sister in Christ, by any other human being. Do not say, “I cannot be a Christian because I am not as mournful as So-and-So was.” God forbid that you should fall into such a delusion as to think that you ought to imitate any man’s miseries! Do not say, on the other hand, “I cannot be a Christian because I have not the joys which I have heard such an eminent saint speak of.” It would be an ill day for you if you should try to counterfeit those joys! The man who said, “I am like an owl,” and the man who said, “My youth is renewed like the eagle’s,” are both in Heaven praising God! If they were two different men, both were accepted in the same Savior, both were washed in the same precious blood and both entered into the same everlasting Glory—and you, whether you are joyful or miserable, if you are depending alone upon the atoning work of Jesus Christ, shall be there too, in due time, to praise the Lord forever with them!

II. But now, secondly, I have to remind you that SAINTS DIFFER FROM THEMSELVES AT DIFFERENT PERIODS. They are not at all times what they are sometimes.

I feel morally certain that David wrote both these Psalms, for there are very similar expressions in both of them. Anyone who has studied every verse and letter of the Psalms, with diligent care, as I may rightly claim that I have done, gets to feel as if he knew the tones of David’s voice and could tell which is Asaph’s and which is David’s. And there is, to my mind, a Davidic ring in this 102nd Psalm quite as surely as there is in the 103rd. If it is so, then it was David who one day said, “I am like an owl of the desert.” And the day after said to his own soul, concerning his God, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” It was the same man in different moods—and Brothers and Sisters, we know, experimentally, that the children of God have these various moods!

First, notice the contrast here—a contrast which I have verified and so have you, if you are a child of God. Here is a man under sense of sin. He has discovered that he is a lost soul. The arrows of God drink up the life of his spirit and his self-righteousness is smitten and withered. He cannot bear company and gaiety, nor even the common joys of life, so he gets away alone and pines, and cries, “I am like an owl of the desert.” The most dreadful verses that he can find in the book of Job, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah exactly suit his case. This is how he talks to his God— “I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping because of Your indignation and Your wrath: for You have lifted me up and cast me down.” But look what happens when the Lord Jesus Christ manifests Himself to that poor guilty sinner! He looks at Christ upon the Cross—it is a trembling look and his eyes are half blinded by his tears and by the mists arising from his doubts and fears—but he does look to Christ, honestly and sincerely, and trusts Him with his soul!

Have you not seen the change that such an experience works in men? Now he is not like an owl any longer. His sin is completely forgiven. In a moment he has passed from darkness into marvelous light, from bondage into liberty, from death unto life! Now, like the eagle, he stretches his wings and mounts aloft into the glorious sunlight! Ask him whether he is like an owl, now, and he will say, “God forbid! Why should I be?” See how the man walks now? Before, his feet seemed like lead. Now, they appear almost as if they were winged, like the feet of the fabled messenger of the gods. Now, the man runs along the path of duty! He delights in his God. He loves Him! He adores Him! He triumphs in Him and boasts of the Lord Jesus Christ as His Savior. All this change is sometimes worked in a single hour—yes, in a single moment the sackcloth and ashes are taken away, the loins are girded with the garments of praise— and sorrow is changed into overflowing bliss! There you have one example of the contrast between the owl and the eagle spirit.

And, afterwards, in the Christian life, you may see the same difference. Here is a Believer in deep trouble. Christians have a promise that they shall have trouble and that is one of the promises that God always keeps! “In the world you shall have tribulation.” Now see the Christian in the time of his tribulation—sometimes he is bowed to the very earth under it. If you need an example, look at Job, covered with sore boils from head to foot, sitting among ashes and scraping himself with a potsherd. His children dead, his property destroyed, his friends—the few that remain— miserable comforters to him! Watch him a little while till the Lord returns to him in mercy and gives him twice as much as he had before, and “blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.” So is it, often, with the people of God today. If they do not receive temporal prosperity, they get spiritual blessings that are more valuable by far and so, up from the ashes, God’s Jobs still arise! From the willows they take their harps, again, and—

*“Loud to the praise of love Divine,*

*Bid every string awake,”*  
because the Lord has dealt so graciously with them! So you see that the same men may be like owls in their time of trouble and like eagles in the day of their deliverance out of it.

The contrast will be still more conspicuous if you look at another picture. It is a portrait of yourself and of myself. Do you ever sit down and look within and look around and look beneath? If so, when you look within, you see imperfections, infirmities, temptations, sins. You fetch a long-drawn sigh and moan, “I shall surely fall one day by the hand of the enemy. With all this combustible material in my heart, someday there will be a terrible catastrophe and my profession of religion will be destroyed in a moment.” Possibly you look around you. Business is not prospering. Perhaps one child is sick and ill. Another is deformed, another has gone out to a job, but is not behaving well. You have all manner of troubles. Your house is not “so” either with yourself, or with God, as you desire it to be. Then you look down. You feel that you are soon going to die and you wonder how you will bear the pains, groans and dying strife. And your dear wife will be a widow and your children fatherless. Ah, you fetch some more sighs and say to yourself, “I am like a pelican of the wilderness—I am like an owl of the desert.” Of course you are and you always will be as long as you turn your eyes inside! But when, instead of looking within, or around you, or looking down to the grave, you look up and see Christ, the ever-living Savior who has passed through the grave and now lives to die no more, you will no longer dread to die because you will know that there is to be a glorious Resurrection in which you shall share!

Then you will not be, any longer, like an owl of the desert, but you will mount aloft, above the clouds, into the clear blue sky of happy fellowship with the ever-blessed God, rejoicing that in Christ Jesus your salvation is accomplished, the Everlasting Covenant is signed, sealed and ratified, your security certain beyond all doubt, you yourself adopted into the family of God and being made ready, in due season, to enter into the glorious abode of eternal bliss! When you realize all this, no longer will you sigh, and cry, and repine, but you will rejoice “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Give up the habit of looking within or around you, or if you do sometimes mourn over what you see there, even then say, with David, “Although my house is not so with God; yet He has made with me”—you can see the eagle stretching his wings there—“yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

Let me set before you another contrast. Sometimes even good men, when they rise in the morning, get up in a humor which is anything but amiable. They go downstairs and find their family in a condition which is anything but amiable. They go out to their business and they find their affairs anything but pleasing. All day long everything seems to go wrong with them, or else they go wrong with everything—which is probably the real truth. Some Believers seem to like to indulge in a little comfortable misery and appear all day long to determine to be unhappy. A certain thing in which they are interested has not prospered as they desired, although it has prospered far beyond their deserts. Another thing has not happened just as they wished it might, though it has happened a great deal better than they ought to reasonably have expected.

Have you ever met a Brother in that condition? I have, and I have also met Sisters in the same condition! I have gone to visit them and their story, from beginning to end while I have been there, has been about their rheumatism, or about the smallness of their allowance from the church or the parish, or about their sorrow at having lost so many friends and helpers! But what a mercy it is when the sorrowful soul is helped to shake off that depression and to say, with Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” This is the way to leave the owl in the desert and to let the eagle soar upwards in his glorious flight! Suppose we have miseries—have we not also mercies? Are Marah’s waters bitter? Then put the Cross of Christ into them and they will at once be sweetened! Is your way rough? Yet your God leads you in it, so it must be the right way! Does it traverse a desert? Yet the manna has always fallen even there! Are you weary and footsore? Then remember that “there remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God.”

Some people will always look on what they call “the black side” of things, but to faith’s eye, there is no black side, for even the dark side of God’s Providential dealings with us glows with light when faith looks at it! Many people appear to take a telescope and try to look through it upon the unknown future and, before they look, in their anxiety they breathe on the glass and then, as they gaze, they cry, “There are a great many clouds to be seen!” Yet, all the while, it is only their own breath that has created them! It is best for the Believer to leave the future with God—to rest entirely in His purposes of love and mercy and to march forward singing to his God—

*“What may be my future lot  
Well I know concerns me not!  
This should set my heart at rest,  
What Your will ordains is best.”*

Here is another contrast. From the 102nd Psalm we learn that the Believer, in his trouble, had forgotten to eat his bread, but in the 103rd Psalm we are told that the Believer, in his joy, has his mouth satisfied with good things. There are some persons who fall into spiritual trouble through neglecting the means of Divine Grace. You say that you are very depressed in spirit, that you have lost your evidences and are brought very low. Brother, let me ask you some personal questions. How long is it since you were at a Prayer Meeting? How long is it since you were at a week-night service? How long is it since you left off the habit of carefully reading a daily portion of God’s Word? How long is it since you enjoyed conscious fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ? I asked a Christian, as I believe him to be, that question some time ago, and he shook his head and said, “I wish you had not asked me that question, for, alas, it has been many a month since I could truly say that I have had any such fellowship.” If that is the case with any of you, do you wonder that you are like an owl of the desert? If a child never goes to his father to get a good word from him, is it any wonder that he doubts whether his father loves him? What wife would live in the same house with her husband and yet never speak to him by the six months together? It would be a shame if she did act like that, yet here are some of us, with Christ always near us, living on without speaking to Him, or having fellowship with Him! Well may such a person be like an owl of the desert—but let a man begin diligently to attend the means of Grace, let him be much in private prayer, let him seek fellowship with Jesus—and he will soon shake off his mourning and forget his sorrows! And up again into the clear air he will mount, like the eagles, on wings renewed by God!

The last point of contrast is this. The owl is a bird that is afraid of the light. It loves the darkness and, therefore, it loves not the sunshine. But the eagle is not afraid of the sun—it even dares to stare into the face of the great father of day! There are also some Christians who appear to be afraid of the Light of God. They have a little, but they do not want too much. I have heard of a good man who would never read, at family prayer, that chapter about Philip and the eunuch. There is, in that chapter, a good deal of the Light of Good upon the subject of Believers’ Baptism and that man did not want to read about it, for he was afraid of the Light. Others will not read those passages, in the Epistles, which speak of Election, Predestination, Particular Redemption, Final Perseverance and similar great Truths of God that are revealed by the Holy Spirit. Such people say that these doctrines are too Calvinistic, so they do not read about them, for they do not want to see too much Light. I know Christians—at least they profess to be Christians—who, in various matters, are like the owl of the desert—they do not like the Light. But the true-born child of God needs the Light of God—he cannot have too much of it! He delights to do his Lord’s will. He says of everything he does, “If it is not according to God’s Word, I desire to be undeceived concerning it. And if there is any Truth of God taught by the Holy Spirit which I have not yet received, I desire to receive it and to sit down humbly at Jesus’ feet, to unlearn all I know if it is wrong, and to learn whatever He would have me learn.” Let us pray to God to give us the eagle eyes which are glad of the light and to take away from us the sleepy eyes of the owl which only see in the darkness.

III. My last point, for which I have only a minute or two left, is this— THE LORD ALONE CAN CHANGE SPIRITUAL SADNESS INTO SPIRITUAL GLADNESS.

No hand can heal a broken heart save the Divine hand that made it. The minister’s words cannot heal your wounds. The Holy Spirit alone can pour in the true balm. The ancient question was, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?” The answer is, No, there is none. There is no balm in Gilead—that is not the place to look for it. There is no physician there. If there were, the health of God’s people might be recovered. But it is not recovered in Gilead and never will be. The only true balm comes from Calvary! The only unfailing Physician is He who has gone up to His Father’s Throne, yet who hears the cry of all who call upon Him in sincerity. He alone can turn the owl into an eagle, but He can do it! He understands your case, for He has passed through an experience exactly similar to yours. He has not only walked the hospitals that is an essential thing for a physician to do, but He has, Himself, lain on the bed in the hospital. Christ took upon Himself our sicknesses and bore our sorrows—and even our sins were caused to meet upon Him when He hung on the accursed tree as the Substitute for all who believe in Him! You have, therefore, the best of physicians to heal you! So, sinsick Soul, look to Him! If you have only an owl’s eyes, yet turn them unto Christ and He will change them into an eagle’s eyes. If you are only as the owl of the desert, resolve that you will see no light but His Light, for, then, His Light will surely soon come to you!

Remember, O you Mourners, that there is one Person of the everblessed Trinity who has been pleased to consecrate Himself to the work of comforting tried and troubled souls. As Christ has redeemed us, so the Holy Spirit comforts us. He is The Comforter, The Almighty Comforter. As God Himself has become the Comforter, what case of sorrow can be thought to be hopeless? Of old, the Lord said, “As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and you shall be comforted.” And our Lord Jesus Christ, after going back to Heaven, has sent us the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter. And the Holy Spirit uses the very best medicine that can possibly be compounded. Do you ask, “What is that?” Christ said to His disciples, “He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” What medicine can ever be equal to the things of Christ? O poor owl of the desert, if the Spirit of God shall come and visit you, as He will, and reveal the things of Christ to your soul, you will then spread your wings, like an eagle, and mount aloft into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus!

With one more remark I will close my discourse. Whenever a soul is cast down by God, there is a reason for it, and that reason is love. When the Lord kills, why does He do that? When He wounds, why does He do it? Here is the reason, given in His own words, “I kill, and I make alive. I wound, and I heal.” You must first be stripped by God if you are to be clothed by Him! You must be emptied if you are to be filled! You must be uprooted if you are to be transplanted! You must become nothing if Christ is to be your All-in-All! Is not this Christ’s usual rule, that He cuts down the green tree, and makes the dry tree to flourish? The Virgin Mary truly sang, “He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty: He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.” Destitute, empty, broken, crushed, wounded, dead—you are just the sort of people Jesus came to save!

He came into the world to save sinners, to seek and to save the lost. So you, being lost, are the most suitable objects for the display of His love. I am sent to preach the Gospel to the broken-hearted, to minister consolation to the afflicted and tried, and to tell of the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Not to those who are satisfied with their own righteousness, but to those who know that they are sinners do we preach a Savior! You who can fall no lower than you are—unless you sink into the lowest Hell—are the very persons to be the objects of Divine regard! Your extremity is God’s opportunity to bless you. To you who pine, sigh, cry and say, “We are like the owls of the desert,” is this message of mercy proclaimed, by the voice that sounds even in the wilderness, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she has received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

Bankrupt sinners, come and learn how all your debts have been discharged! Wounded sinners, come and be healed by the Great Physician! Yes, and even to you who are dead, and in your graves, the Lord says, “Live.” And you shall live, even as the Lord Jesus said to Martha, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” The Lord grant you Grace to look to Jesus, that the owls’ eyes may now be turned into eagles’ eyes and the owls of the desert into eagles, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 102.**

Kindly notice the title of this Psalm—“Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the LORD.” I call your attention to it in order to remind you what charges there are in the life of a Believer. Here, in the 102nd Psalm, the afflicted saint is pouring out his complaint. And then, in the 103rd, the rejoicing Believer is blessing the Lord in a jubilant song of grateful praise. Such are a true Christian’s ups and downs, nights and days, and I can see how the 103rd Psalm blossoms out of the 102nd. When the afflicted Believer can pour out his complaint before the Lord, it will not be long before he will be able to cry, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” If you carry your complaint in your own bosom, or tell it to some earthly friend, you will probably continue to have cause to complain. But if you pour out your heart before God, it will not be long before He will give you ease and relief.

Verses 1, 2. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto You. Hide not Your face from me in the day when I am in trouble. “For that would make my trouble to be unbearable.” So William Cowper sings—

*“That were a grief I could not bear  
Did You not hear and answer prayer.”*

2. Incline Your ear unto me. “Stoop down to me. Bend over me. Listen to the moans of my darkness, the whispers of my weakness.”  
2. In the day when I call, answer me speedily. “For I am brought so low that if a delay is not a denial, it will be tantamount to it, for I shall be dead before the answer comes unless it reaches me speedily.”  
3, 4. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as in a hearth. My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. That is a very pitiful state for anyone to be brought into, in which the sorrow of the mind begins to weaken the strength of the body! The soul itself is so inflamed that a fever is generated within the bodily frame, which seems “burned as in a hearth.”  
5. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. By grief he had brought himself down to such an emaciated state that his bones pierced through his skin.

6, 7. I am like the pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. He had got into such a melancholy state of mind that he shunned human company, sought solitude and became as mournful a creature as “an owl of the desert.”

8-10. My enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping because of Your indignation and Your wrath: for You have lifted me up and cast me down. Observe that all David’s enemies could not make him weep. Mad as they were against him, they could not extort a tear from his eyes, but God’s indignation and wrath touched him to the quick and made him mingle his drink with weeping. He felt that God was treating him as wrestlers treat one another—when a man deliberately lifts up his opponent in order that he may give him the worse fall—“You have lifted me up and cast me down.” All the joys that he had ever known seemed to make his sorrow the more bitter. The Light of God’s Countenance, in which he had formerly walked, made the darkness, in which he was enshrouded, to seem all the blacker.

11, 12. My days are like a shadow that declines; and I am withered like grass. But You, O LORD, shall endure forever; and Your remembrance unto all generations. That was David’s usual way—to comfort himself in his God when he could find no comfort in himself or in his surroundings. You remember that he did so on that memorable occasion when Ziklag was burned and the people spoke of stoning him—“David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” We shall be wise if we follow his example, for, when every other source of joy is dried up, when all earthly wells are stopped up by the Philistines, the stream of God’s mercy flows on as freely as ever!

13, 14. You shall arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, is come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. God is sure to bless His Church when the members of it take a deep interest in even the least things that appertain to God’s cause. “Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.” I fear that, in many churches, the set time to favor Zion has been postponed by the apathy, the lethargy, or the carelessness of many of those who profess to be the servants of God!

15, 16. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your Glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory. It was to God’s Glory for Him to build up the ancient Jewish Kingdom and it is equally to His Glory to build up His Church at the present time—quarrying the stones of nature, changing them by His almighty power, polishing them, by His Grace, after the similitude of a palace, building them up upon the one Foundation, that is, Jesus Christ—laying course upon course until the whole structure shall be finished.

17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. There is a gracious promise for all destitute souls who cry unto God!

18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD. This is written for our comfort, dear Friends! There it stands permanently, in this blessed Book, that as long as there is a destitute and tried people of God, He will not despise their prayer!

19. For He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from Heaven did the LORD behold the earth. As if God was looking down from the battlements of Heaven, observing, watching for something—and what is it that God is looking for?

20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death. Is not that a delightful view of God? Watching not for the music of sweet singers, nor for the noise of victorious warriors, but for “the groaning of the prisoner,” the sight of those shut up in the condemned cell, “appointed to death.”

21-23. To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD. He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. It is most instructive to notice how the Psalmist ascribes all to God, not only his strength, but his weakness—not merely his extended life, but even the shortening of his days! It takes away the sting from our sorrow when we know that it comes from God. It helps us to bear any apparent calamity when we feel that it is our Heavenly Father’s hand that has worked it all, or His will that has permitted it to happen.

24-27. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Your years are throughout all generations. Of old have You laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure: yes, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall have no end. The ever-living God is our constant comfort amidst the ever-changing scenes of this mortal life! Yes, and when we come even to the border of the land of death-shade, this is still our joy, “The Lord lives,” for, from the midst of the Throne of God, we hear our Savior say, “Because I live, you shall live also.”

28. The children of Your servant shall continue. We pass away, but our children take our place. As Wesley said, “God buries His workmen, but His work goes on.” One generation passes away, but another comes in its place.

28. And their seed shall be established before You. Blessed be the name of the ever-living God!  
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THE SAINTS BLESSING THE LORD  
NO. 1078

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 20, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”  
Psalm 103:1.**

You see here a man talking to himself, a soul with all his soul talking to his soul. Every speaker should learn to soliloquize. His own soul is the first audience a good man ought to think of preaching to. Before we address ourselves to others we should lecture within the doors of our own heart. Indeed, if any man desires to excite the hearts of others in any given direction, he must first stir up himself upon the same matter. He who would make others grateful must begin by saying, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

David had never risen to the height of saying, “Bless the Lord, you His angels,” or, “Bless the Lord, all His works,” if he had not first tuned his own voice to the gladsome music. No man is fit to be a conductor in the choirs of holy song until he has learned, himself, to sing the song of praise. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” is the preacher’s preparation in the study, without which he must fail in the pulpit. Self-evident as this is, many persons need to be reminded of it, for they are ready enough to admonish others, but forget that true gratitude to God must, like charity, begin at home. There is an old proverb which says, “The cobbler’s wife goes barefoot,” and I am afraid this is too often the case in morals and religion.

Preachers ought especially to be jealous of themselves in this particular, lest, while they are crying aloud to other men to magnify the Lord, they should be shamefully silent themselves. I would this morning glow with the sacred flame of personal thankfulness while I call upon you to bless the holy name of Jehovah, our God. But what is true of preachers is true of all other workers. The tendency among men is, when they grow a little earnest, to expend their zeal upon other people and frequently in the way of fault-finding. It is wonderfully easy to wax indignant at the indolence, the divisions, the coldness or the errors of the Christian Church, and to issue our little bulls against her, declaring her to be weighed in our balances and found wanting, as if it mattered one halfpenny to the Church what the verdict of our imperfect scales might be!

Why, instead of a tract upon the faults of the Church, at the present moment, it would be easy to write a folio volume and when it was written it would be wise to put it in the fire! Friend, mind those beams in your own eye and leave the Lord Jesus to clear the motes from the eyes of His Church. Begin at home—there is in-door work to be done. Instead of vainly pointing to the faults of others, pour forth your earnestness in praising God and say unto your own heart, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

You observe that this preacher, with an audience of one, has a very choice subject—he is exhorting himself to bless God. Now, in a certain sense it is not possible for us to bless God. He blesses us and in the same sense we cannot bless Him. He has all things—what can we give Him? When we have given our best we are compelled to confess, “Of Your own have we given unto You.” But we bless Him by being thankful, by extolling Him for the gifts He has bestowed, by loving Him in consequence of His bounty towards us and by allowing these emotions of our mind to influence our life so that we speak well of His name, and act so as to glorify Him among our fellow men. In these ways we can bless God and we know that He accepts such attempts, poor and feeble though they are. God is pleased with our love and thankfulness, and so, speaking after the manner of men, He is blessed by His children’s desires and praises.

Note that the Psalmist stirred himself up to bless God’s name, by which is meant His Character—though, indeed, we may take the word literally, for every name of God is a reason for thankfulness. We will praise Jehovah, the Self-Existent. We will praise El, the mighty God whose power is on our side. We will praise Him who gives Himself the Covenant name of Elohim and reveals therein the Trinity of His sacred unity. We will praise the Shaddai, the All-Sufficient God and magnify Him because out of His fullness have we all received. And whatever other name there is in Scripture, or combination of names, every one shall be exceedingly delightful to our hearts and we will bless the sacred name.

We will bless the Father, from whose everlasting love we received our election unto eternal life—the Father who has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead. We bless the Father of our spirits, who has given to us an inheritance among all them that are set apart. And we bless the Son of God, Jesus our Savior, Christ—anointed to redeem. Our heart dances for joy at every remembrance of Him! There is not a name of Jesus Christ’s Person, or offices, or relationships which we would forget to bless. Whether He is Immanuel, Jesus, or the Word. Whether He is Prophet, Priest or King— whether He is Brother, Husband or Friend—whatever name seems His beloved Person dear to us, we will bless Him under it.

And the Holy Spirit, too—our Comforter, the Paraclete, the heavenly Dove who dwells within our hearts in infinite condescension, whom Heaven cannot contain but yet who finds a habitation within the bodies of His servants which are His temples—we will assuredly praise Him! Each one of His influences shall evoke from us grateful praise—if He is like the wind—we will be as Aeolian harps. If He is dew—we will bloom with flowers. If He is flame—we will glow with ardor. If He is oil—our faces shall shine. In whatever way He moves upon us we will be responsive to His voice and while He blesses us we will bless His holy name.

But if the very name of God is thus blessed to us, certainly the Character which lies beneath the name shall be inexpressibly delightful. Select any attribute of God you will and it is a reason for our loving Him. Is He Immutable?—blessed be His name, He loves everlastingly. Is He Infinite?—then glory be to Him, it is infinite affection which He has bestowed upon us. Is He Omnipotent?—then will He put forth all His power for His own beloved. Is He Wise?—then He will not err, nor fail to bring us safely to our promised rest. Is He Gracious?—then in that Grace we find our comfort and defense—whatever there is in God, known or unknown, we will bless.

My God! I cannot apprehend You with my understanding, but I comprehend You with my affections, and so, if I cannot know You all in my mind, I love You altogether in my heart! My intellect is too narrow to contain You, but my heart expands herself to the infinity of Your Majesty and loves You, whatever You may be! You are unknown in great measure, but You are not unloved by my poor heart! Thus the Psalmist calls upon us to bless the Lord. I would like to dwell upon those emphatic words in his exhortation—“His holy name.”

Only a holy man can delight in holy things. Holiness is the terror of unholy men! They love sin and count it liberty, but holiness is to them a slavery. If we are saints we shall bless God for His holiness and be glad that in Him there is no spot nor flaw. He is without iniquity—He is just and right. Even to save His people He would not violate His Law. Even to deliver His own beloved from going down into the Pit, He would not turn away from the paths of equity. “Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth,” is the loftiest cry of cherubim and seraphim in their perfect bliss—it is a joyous song both to the saints on earth and those in Heaven. The pure in heart gaze on the Divine holiness with awe-struck joy!

Having thus expounded the words briefly, we will now come to the main point of the exhortation. The Psalmist stirs us up to bless God with our whole being and I pray the Holy Spirit to bring us to that condition this morning. Upon that part of the exhortation we shall now dwell.

I. And our first remark shall be that this exhortation is REMARKABLY COMPREHENSIVE. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul”—there is the unity of our nature. “And all that is within me”—there are the diverse powers and faculties which make up the variety of our nature. The unity and the diversity are both summoned to the delightful employment of magnifying God!

First, the unity of our nature is here bid, in its concentration, to yield its whole self to the praise of God. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul”—he means thereby not his lips only, not his hands upon the harp strings, not his eyes uplifted towards Heaven, but his soul, his very self, his truest self. Never let me present to God the outward and superficial alone, but let me render to Him the inner and the sincere. Let me never bring before Him merely the outward senses which my soul uses, but the soul which uses these instrumental faculties. No whitewashed sepulchers will please the Lord—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul”—let the true ego praise Him, the essential I, the vital personality, the soul of my soul, the life of my life!

Let me be true to the core to my God. Let that which is most truly my own vitality spend itself in blessing the Lord. The soul is our best self. We must not merely bless the Lord with our body, which will soon become worm’s meat and is but dust at its best—but with our inner, ethereal nature which makes us akin to angels—yes, that which causes it to be said that in the image of God we were created. My spiritual nature, my loftiest powers must magnify God—not the voice which sings a hypocritical Magnificat, but the heart which means it! Not the lips which cry Hosanna thoughtlessly—but the mind which considers and intelligently worships. Not only this little narrow walk of my body would I fill with song, but the infinite—through which my spirit soars on wings of boundless thought—I would make that shoreless region vocal with Jehovah’s praise! My real self, my best self shall bless the Lord.

But the soul is also our immortal self, that which will outlast time and, being redeemed by precious blood, shall pass through Judgment and enter into the worlds unknown forever to dwell at the right hand of God triumphant in His eternal love. My immortal Soul, what have you to do with spending your energies upon mortal things? Will you hunt for fleeting shadows while you are, yourself, most real and abiding? Will you heap up bubbles while you, yourself, will endure forever in a life coeval with the existence of God Himself, for He has given you eternal life in His Son Jesus? Bless the Lord, then—so noble a thing as you are should not be occupied with less worthy matters. Raise yourself on all your wings and like the sixwinged cherubim adore your God!

But the words suggest yet another meaning—the soul is our active self, our vigor, our intensity. When we speak of a man’s throwing his soul into a thing we mean that he does it with all his might. We say, “There is no soul in him,” by which we do not mean that the man does not live, but that he has no vigor or force of character, no love, no zeal. My most intense nature shall bless the Lord. Not with bated breath and a straitened energy will I lisp forth His praises, but I will pour them forth vehemently and ardently in volumes of impassioned song. Never serve God with a hand loathe for labor which would gladly withdraw itself if it dared.

If you do your own business in a lax fashion, yet do not God’s business so. If you go to sleep over anything let it be over your money-making, or your buying and selling, but evermore be awake in your service of the Lord. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul!” If ever you are thoroughly awakened, awake now! If ever you were all life, all emotion, all energy, all enthusiasm, enter into the same condition again! Let every part be full of ardor, sensitive with emotion, nerved with impulse, borne upward by resolution, impelled by onward force! As Samson, when he smote the Philistines hip and thigh, used every muscle, sinew and bone of his body in crushing his adversaries, so you serve God with all and every force you have. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul!”

O God, my hand, my tongue, my mind, my heart shall all adore You— *“Every string shall have its attribute to sing.”*My united, concentrated, entire being shall bless You, You infinitely glorious Jehovah! I pray you, my Brothers and Sisters, either do not pretend to praise God at all, or praise Him with all your might. If you are Christian people, be out and out Christians or let Christianity alone. None hinder the glorious kingdom of Christ so much as these half-and-half men and women who blow hot and cold with the same breath! My Brethren, be thorough! Plunge into this stream of life as bathers do who dive to the very bottom and swim in the broad stream with intense delight. Do this, or else make no profession.

But then, David speaks of the diverse faculties of our nature, and writes, “All that is within me bless His holy name.” I think the Psalm itself, if we had time to comment upon it, might suggest in succession all our mental powers and passions. For instance, when he said, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” he meant, of course, first of all let the heart bless Him, for that is often synonymous with the soul. The affections are to lead the way in the concert of praise. But the Psalmist intended, next, to stir up the memory, for he goes on to say, “forget not all His benefits.”

May I ask you, beloved Friends, to recollect what God has done for you? Thread the jewels of His Grace upon the thread of memory and hang them about the neck of praise. Can you count the leaves of the forest in autumn, or number the small dust of the threshing floor? Then, can you give the sum of His loving kindnesses? For mercies beyond count praise Him without stint. Then let your

 conscience praise Him, for the Psalm proceeds to say, “who forgives all your iniquities.” Conscience once weighed your sins and condemned you—now let it weigh the Lord’s pardon and magnify His Grace to you. Count the purple drops of Calvary and say, “Thus my sins were washed away.”

Let your conscience praise the Sin-Bearer who has caused it to flow with peace like a river and to abound in righteousness as the waves of the sea. Let your emotions join the sacred choir, for you have this day, if you are like the Psalmist, many feelings of delight. Bless Him “who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, and who satisfies your mouth with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.” Is all within you peaceful today? Sing the 23rd Psalm. Let the calm of your spirit sound forth the praises of the Lord upon the pleasant harp and the psaltery.

Do your days flow smoothly? Then consecrate the dulcimer to the Lord. Are you joyful this day? Do you feel the exhilaration of delight? Then praise the Lord with the timbrel and dance. On the other hand, is there a contention within? Does conflict disturb your mind? Then praise Him with the sound of the trumpet, for He will go forth with you to the battle. When you return from the battle and divide the spoil, then, “praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.” Whatever emotional state your soul is found in, let it lead you to bless your Maker’s holy name!

Perhaps, however, just now your thoughts exceed your emotions for you have been considering the Providence of God as you have read the histories of nations and seen their rise and fall—and have watched the hand of God in men’s lives. So also did David, and he sang, “The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.” Let your judgment praise the Judge of all the earth! Let every day’s newspaper give you fresh matter for praise—for every Christian should so read the paper or not at all. God’s praise is the true end of history! His Providence is the pith and marrow of all the stories of the empires of the past. To the man of understanding the centuries are stanzas of a Divine epic, whereof the great subject is the Lord of Hosts in His excellency.

Do not forget to bring your knowledge to your aid in your song. You have the Scriptures and you have the Spirit to teach you their inner sense, therefore you can soar above David when he sang, “He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.” He has made known His Son unto you and in you—therefore glorify Him! The harvests of the fields of knowledge should be stored in the garners of adoration. Even our human learning should be laid at the Lord’s feet, for the vessels of the tabernacle were made of the gold which Israel brought out of the land of Egypt. We should make each rivulet of knowledge swell our gratitude. Believer, know not anything which you can not consecrate, or else loathe to know it. Whatever fruits, new or old, are stored in your memory, let them be all laid up for the Beloved and none else. Knowledge should supply the spices and love, the flame, and so the censer of worship should always smoke with fragrant perfume.

Be sure, too, that your faculty of wonder is used in holy things—let your astonishment bless God. You cannot measure the distance from the east to the west—you are lost in the immensity before you—but oh, bless God with your wonder as you see your sins thus far removed from you! You cannot tell how high the heavens are above the earth, but let your astonishment at the greatness of Creation lead you to adoration, for so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him! Ah, and your very fears, let them bow low before the Lord. Do you fear because you are frail? He remembers that we are dust. Do you tremble at the thought of death? Then praise Him who spares you, though you are before Him as a flower of the field withered by the wind when it passes over you. Magnify from a sense of your insignificance the splendor of that condescending love which pities you, even “as a father pities his children.”

As for your hopes, sweet are their voices—let them not remain silent— as they peer into the future let them sing for, “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him.” What more could hope desire to make her rouse her choicest minstrelsy? By-and-by we shall be where even the last verses of the Psalm will not be above our experience, for we shall see the Lord upon that Throne which He has prepared in the heavens. And then we will bid angels that excel in strength and all the heavenly ministry to bless the Lord! Happy are we as we anticipate the day, and, filled with expectation, cry aloud, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul!”

I think you will now perceive that, if time permitted, we could bring out every single mental faculty and show that David has given it scope, as though this Psalm were the working out of a problem and practically showed how each particular power of the soul can praise God. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot longer tarry on this point. You know, each of you, what faculty you possess in the greatest strength. I pray you use it for God. You know which phase your soul is in just now—bless God while you are in that mood, whatever it is.

“All that is within me,” says the text—then let it be all. Some of us have a vein of humor and though we try to keep it under restraint it will peep out. What then? Why let us make it bear the Lord’s yoke! This faculty is not necessarily common or unclean—let it be made a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the Lord. On the other hand, some of you have a touch of despondency in your nature—take care to subdue it to the Lord’s praise. You are the men to sing those grave melodies which in some respects are the pearls of song. A little pensiveness is good flavoring. The muse is at her best when she is pleasingly melancholy.

Praise God, my Brethren, as you are. Larks must not refrain from singing because they are not nightingales, nor must the sparrow refuse to chirp because he cannot emulate the linnet. Let every tree of the Lord’s planting praise the Lord! Clap your hands, you trees of the forests, while fruitful trees and all cedars join in His praise. Both young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord, each one in his peculiar note—for you are all necessary to the perfect harmony. The Lord would not have you borrow your brother’s tones, but use “all that is within you,” all that is peculiar to your own idiosyncrasy, for His glory!

Spend all your strength, yes, every atom of it! Keep back nothing, but render all that is within you unto Him. If all that is within you is the Lord’s, all that is outside of you, which is yours, will also be His. All your bodily faculties will praise Him and the outer life will be all for God. Let your house praise Him. Beneath its roof may there ever be an altar to the God of all the families of Israel. Let your table praise Him—learn to eat and drink to His glory. Let your bed praise Him—let the bells upon the horses be holiness unto the Lord—let the very garments that you wear, seeing they are the gifts of His charity, commend the Lord to your praise. Yes, let each breath you breathe inspire a new song unto the Preserver of men. Make your life a Psalm and be yourself a hymn—“all that is within me bless His holy name.” The text is comprehensive.

II. Secondly, the suggestion of the text is MOST REASONABLE, for, first, God has created all that is within us except the sin which mars us. Every faculty, susceptibility, power or passion, is of the Lords fashioning. It were not ours to feel, to think, to hope, to judge, to tear, to trust, to know, or to imagine if He had not granted us the power. Who should own the house but the builder? Who should have the harvest but the farmer? Who should receive the obedience of the child but the father? To whom, then, O my Soul, should you render the homage of your nature but to Him who made you all that you are?

Moreover, the Lord has redeemed our entire manhood. When we had gone astray and all our faculties, like lost sheep, had taken, each one, its own several roads of sin, Christ came into the world and redeemed our entire nature—spirit, soul, body—not a part of the man, but our complete humanity! Jesus Christ did not die for our souls only, but for our bodies, too. And though at this present, “the body is dead because of sin,” and therefore we suffer pain and disease, yet the spirit is already life because of righteousness, and in its life we have a sure guarantee of the quickening of our mortal bodies in the day of the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.

We shall, at the coming of the Lord, be wholly restored in body and soul by the Lord’s Divine power—therefore let body and soul praise Him who has redeemed both by His most precious blood! My Body, you are not mine to pamper you, you are my Lord’s to serve Him, for His blood has paid your ransom price and secured your resurrection. My Soul, my Spirit, whatever faculty you have, Christ’s blood is on all, therefore you are not your own. It would be sad, indeed, even to think of having an unredeemed will or an unredeemed judgment—but it is not so—every faculty is emancipated by a ransom. If the blood on the lintel has saved the house, then it has saved every room—and every chamber of ours should be consecrated to the Redeemer’s praise.

Brothers and Sisters, the Lord has given innumerable blessings to every part of our nature. We spoke of them just now, one by one, and it would be very easy to show that all our faculties are the recipients of blessing and therefore they should all bless God in return. Every pipe of the organ should yield its quota of sound. As in an eagle, every bone, muscle and feather is made with a view to flight, so is every part of a regenerate man created for praise. As all the rivers run into the sea, so all our powers should flow towards the Lord’s praise. To prove that this is reasonable, let me ask one single question—if we do not devote all that is within us to the glory of God, which part is it that we should leave unconsecrated? And being less unconsecrated to God, what should we do with it? It would be impossible to give a proper answer to this question.

An unconsecrated part in a Believer’s manhood would become a nest of hornets, or, what if I say a den of devils out of which evils would come forth to prowl over our entire being? A faculty unsanctified would be a leprous spot, a valley of Gehennam, a Dead Sea, a lair of pestilence. To be sanctified—spirit, soul, and body—is essential to us and we must have it. It is but our reasonable service that within us must bless God’s holy name—to withhold part of the price were robbery—to reserve part of our territory from our King would be treason!

III. But I will not further insist that it is reasonable, for I have further to assert that it is NECESSARY. It is necessary that the whole nature bless God, for at its best, when all engaged in the service, it fails to compass the work and falls short of Jehovah’s praise. All the man, with all his might—always occupied in all ways in blessing God—would still be no more than a whisper in comparison with the thunder of praise which the Lord deserves!

One of our poets used a singular expression which the fact more than justifies. He said—  
*“But ah, eternity’s too short  
To utter all Your praise.”*

It is so. The whole company of God’s creatures would be incapable of reflecting the whole of the Divine Glory and such mercy and Grace does God show to us in the gift of His dear Son that the Church militant, and the Church triumphant, together, are not equal to well-deserved praise. Do not, therefore, let us insult the Lord with half when the whole is not enough! Let us not bring Him the tithe, when, if we had 10 times as much, we could not magnify Him as we should.

We must, moreover, give the Lord all because divided powers in every case lead to failure. The men who have succeeded in anything have almost always been men of one thing. He who is jack-of-all-trades is master of none. He who can do a little of this and a little of that never does much of any one thing. The fact is, there is only water enough in the brook of our manhood to drive one wheel, and if we divide it into many trickling runners we shall accomplish nothing. The right thing is to dam up all our forces and allow them to spend themselves in one direction and so pour them all forth upon the constantly revolving wheel of praise to God.

How can we afford life to evaporate in trifles when one aim, only, is worthy of our immortal being? We who have been baptized upon profession of our faith were taught in that solemn ordinance to bless the Lord with our entire being, for we were not sprinkled here or there—but we were, in the outward sign—buried with the Lord Jesus in Baptism unto death. And we were immersed into the name of the Triune God. If our Baptism meant anything it declared that we were henceforth dead to the world and owned no life but that which came to us by the way of the resurrection of Jesus. Over our heads the liquid water flowed, for we resigned the brain with all its powers of thought to Jesus. Over the heart, the veins, the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears, the mouth, the significant element poured itself—symbol of that universal consecration which deluges all the inward nature of every sanctified Believer. My baptized Brothers and Sisters, I charge you not belie your profession! Remember, Beloved, this one telling argument, that Jesus Christ will have all of us or nothing—and He will have us sincere, earnest and intense—or He will not have us at all.

I see the Master at the table and His servants place before Him various meats that He may eat and be satisfied. He tastes the cold meats and He eats of the bread, hot from the oven. But as for tepid drinks and halfbaked cakes He puts them away with disgust. He will look on you who are cold, and are mourning your coldness, and He will give you heat. And He will look on you who are hot and serve Him with the best you have. But of the middle-man, the lukewarm, He says, “I will spew you out of My mouth.” Jesus cannot bear lukewarm religion! He is sick of it! The religion of this present time is, much of it, rather nauseating to the Savior than acceptable to Him.

If Baal is God, serve him. But if God is God, serve Him truly. Let there be no mockery, but be true to the core. Be thorough—throw your soul into your religion! I charge you, stand back awhile and count the cost—for if you wish to give to Christ a little and to Baal a little, you shall be cast away and utterly rejected—the Lord of Heaven will have nothing to do with you! Bless the Lord, then, all that is within me, for only such sincere and undivided homage can be accepted of the Lord.

IV. We must pass on, and ask your attention yet further to the next remark—whole-hearted praise is BENEFICIAL. It is beneficial to ourselves. To be whole-hearted in the praise of God is to elevate our faculties. There can be no doubt whatever that many a man’s powers have been debased by the object which he has pursued. Poets who might have been great poets have missed the highest seats upon Parnassus because they have selected trivial topics or themes gross and impure, and, therefore, the best features of their poems have never been fully developed.

“Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and you will be a man to the fullness of your capacity! This is the way to reach the loftiest peak of human attainment. Consecration is culture. To praise is to learn. To bless God is also of preventive usefulness to us—we cannot bless God and at the same time idolize ourselves. Praise preserves us from being envious of others, for by blessing God for all we have we learn to bless God for what other people have, too. I reckon it to be a great part of praise to be thankful to God for making better men than myself.

If we are always blessing the Lord, this will save us from murmuring— the spirit of discontent will be ejected by the spirit of thankfulness. And this will also deliver us from indolence, for, if all our powers magnify the Most High, we shall scorn the soft couch of ease and seek the place of service that we may bring more honor to our Master. Nothing beautifies a man like praising God! There is a bath in Germany which enamels the bathers, and, if it does not make them beautiful forever, yet, at least beautiful for a while—but to plunge our whole nature in adoration is far more beautifying.

I was told by one who watched the revivals in the north of Ireland years ago that he never saw the human face look so lovely as when it was lit up with the joy of the Holy Spirit during those times of refreshing. You know how pleasing landscapes appear when the sun shines upon them? The scenery has not half its charms till the sun, “of this great world, both eye and soul,” enriches the view with his wealth of color and makes all things glow with God’s Glory. Praise is the sunlight of life.

Some of you conceal beneath a cloud of indifference all the beauty of your characters. You are like the lovely mountains of Cumberland, when they are enshrouded in mist—little or nothing attractive is visible in you. Pray that Divine Grace, like a heavenly wind, would drive off the fogs of our despondency and discontent and shed the sunlight of true praise all over our soul—then the beauty of our new-created man will be discerned! May we have many lovely praiseful Christians in this Church—and may they abound in other Churches, also.

While whole-hearted praise is beneficial to ourselves, it is also useful to others. I am persuaded many souls are converted by the cheerful conversation of Christians and many already converted are greatly strengthened by the holy joy of their Brethren. You cannot do good more effectually than by a happy consecrated life spent in blessing God. Imagine not that pensiveness is the fairest flower of piety. There have been, in the French Church especially, eminent Christians who appear to have realized a likeness to Christ more in the sorrow which marred His visage, than in the joy which sustained His spirit. Jesus sorrowed that we might rejoice! We are no more to imitate Him in His griefs than in His five wounds!

It is truly Christian-like to rejoice in the Lord at all times. We should seek to have Christ’s joy fulfilled in ourselves. If there is anything that is cheerful, joyous, dewy, bright, full of Heaven—it is the life of a man who blesses God all his days. This is the way to win souls! We shall not catch these flies with vinegar—we must use honey. We shall not bring men into the Church by putting into the window of Christ’s shops, coffins and crepe, and shrouds—and standing at the door like mutes. No, we must tell the Truth of God and show sinners the best robe, the wedding ring, and the silver sandals of joy and gladness. We must sing—

*“The men of Grace have found  
Glory began below.  
Celestial truths on earthly ground  
From faith and hope do grow.”*

I read in Thomas Cooper’s, “Plain Talk,” a story of a class leader who was in a sad state of mind and therefore gave out in the class the hymn— *“Ah, where should I go,  
Burdened, and sick, and faint.”*

To one seemed inclined to sing, therefore, the leader asked a certain Brother Martin to start a tune. “No, no,” said Martin, “I’m neither burdened, nor sick nor faint, I’ll start no tune, not I!” “Well, then, Brother Martin,” said the leader, “Give out a verse yourself.” Whereupon Martin, with all the power of his lungs, sang—

*“Oh for a thousand tongues to sing*

*My great Redeemer’s praise.”*  
Ah, that’s the hymn, my Brothers and Sisters, keep to that! If you have not a thousand tongues, at least let the one you have continue to bless the Lord while you have any being.

V. Lastly, all this is PREPARATORY. If we can attain to constant praise now, it will prepare us for all that awaits us. We do not know what will happen to us between this and Heaven, but we can easily prognosticate the aim and result of all that will occur. We are harps which will be tuned in all their strings for the concerts of the Blessed. The Tuner is putting us in order. He sweeps His hands along the strings—there is a jar from every note—so He begins, first, with one string and then goes to another. He continues at each string till He hears the exact note.

The last time you were ill, one of your strings was tuned. The last time you had a bad debt, or trembled at declining business, another string was tuned. And so, between now and Heaven, you will have every string set in order and you will not enter Heaven till all are in tune! Did you ever go to a place where they make pianos and expect to hear sweet music? The tuning room is enough to drive a man mad—and in the factory you hear the screeching of saws and the noise of hammers—and you say, “I thought this was a place where they made pianos.” Yes, so it is, but it is not the place where they play them.

On earth is the place where God makes musical instruments and tunes them—and between now and Heaven He will put all that is within them into fit condition for blessing and praising His name eternally! In Heaven every part of the man will bless God without any difficulty. No need for a preacher there to exhort you! No need for you to talk to yourself and say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul”—you will do it as naturally as now you breathe! You never take any consideration as to how often you shall breathe and you have no plan laid down as to when your blood shall circulate because these matters come naturally to you.

And in Heaven it will be your nature to praise God! You will breathe praise! You will live in an atmosphere of adoration and like those angels who for many an age, day without night, have circled the Throne of Jehovah rejoicing, so will you! But I will not speak much on that, or you will be wanting to be flying away to our own dear country—

*“Where we shall see His face,  
And never, never sin;  
But from the rivers of His Grace  
Drink endless pleasures in.”*

You must stay a little while longer in the tents of Kedar and mingle with the men of soul-distressing Mesech. But till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, say unto your soul, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

I wish all my hearers could do this, but some of you cannot bless God at all and it would be idle for me to tell you to do it! You are dead in your sins. I read a story the other day of a woman convinced of her state by a singular dream. She dreamed she saw her minister standing in the midst of a number of flowerpots which he was watering and she thought that she was one of the flowerpots. But the minister passed her by and said, “It is no use watering that plant, for it is dead.”

This morning I must pass by the dead plants. Oh, Sinner, can you bear this? I do not invite you to sing the Believer’s song of praise—can you bear to be left out? Though I pass you by, I pray the Lord to look upon you and say to you—“Live!” And before I close I must tell you something else which is meant for dead sinners as well as living saints. It is this—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” God grant to you that saving faith for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE KEYNOTE OF THE YEAR  
NO. 2121

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 5, 1890.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 7, 1889.

**“Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” Psalm 103:1.**

BEFORE our friend who leads us in singing begins, we sometimes hear his tuning fork. He is getting the keynote into his ear. When he comes forward he often sounds out that keynote before he begins to sing. This is what David does in this wonderful Psalm. He sounds the tuning fork with this clear note—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” It is well for all to be ready to sing harmoniously—it is a pity when those who gather to worship do not know what they are doing. I wish I could always have you spiritually in tune and keep in tune myself. Alas, I fear we are often half a note too flat.

The words before us are the keynote of this Psalm and all the music is set to it and closes with it. Notice that the Psalm begins, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and it ends in the same way, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” as if to show us that praise is the Alpha and the Omega of a Christian life. Praise is the life of life. So we begin; so we continue; so shall we end, world without end.

This Psalm has just as many verses in the original as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is an alphabetical Psalm as to number and so I may say that the A of it is, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and the Z of it is, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” Oh, that our infancy would bless the Lord and our childhood and our youth bless the Lord—and our manhood and our old age bless the Lord! From the cradle to the tomb one line of sapphire, one streak of sparkling crystal should run through the entire mass of life—and that should be praise unto God.—

*“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise  
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!”*

Oh, to have Heaven’s employment and Heaven’s enjoyment here below by never-ceasing praise! We need never make a pause in that of which we shall never make an end.

As I said in the exposition, there is no prayer in this Psalm—it is all praise right through and through. There are times in a Christian’s life when he feels as if praise employed the whole of his faculties and his own needs and faults and all about himself sank into insignificance. Usually we mix prayer and praise and they make up a delightful incense of mingled fragrance—but sometimes, when on Tabor’s top we stand transfigured with the light of God’s goodness—all we can do is praise His name. All that is within us is blessing Him and there is no faculty left with which to pray Him to bless us! This is an anticipation of the occupation and enjoyment of Heaven, where forever and forever we shall bless and praise and magnify the Thrice-holy God.

At this time I pray that while I talk about this verse I may be carrying it out—and may you be, each one, carrying it out, too, if, indeed, the Lord has blessed you! Let us preach and hear with harps in our hands and songs in our hearts! If I am to lead your thoughts, I will lead them to the place of adoration. If you are His blessed people, be His blessing people! If He has blessed you for many a day, bless Him this day!

I. I call your attention, then, first to THE BLESSED OCCUPATION. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” A truly wonderful word is this! How can we bless the Lord? For God to bless me I can understand and enjoy! But that it should be mentioned in Scripture that I can bless God is one of those incomprehensible things which, though certainly true, is not to be explained. For man to bless God is a sort of Incarnation—God in human flesh. God blessing me—that is Divine! But myself blessing Him—there is something of the human, but also somewhat of the Divine.

The Divine blesses the human or the human could not bless the Divine! God is with us or we could not be thus with God! Our blessing Him can only be the echo of His blessing us! The more you turn it over the more you will wonder at it. If it had said, “Praise the Lord, O my Soul,” that would have been reasonable—but, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” rises out of the region of reason into a still higher and more spiritual atmosphere! These are heavenly words—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

But how can we bless God? We cannot add to His happiness, or increase His greatness, or enlarge His goodness. “O my Soul, you have said unto the Lord, You are my Lord: my goodness extends not unto You!” What can our poor drops contribute to the ocean? What can our nothingness bring to His all-sufficiency? What can our darkness contribute to His light? And yet, if the Bible says so, it must be so, for it never speaks in vain. Idle words are in the speech of man, not in the writings of Jehovah. If the Scripture teaches us to say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” then it is a correct word. We may wonder at it, but we may not dispute it.

How, then, can we bless God? I answer, first, God blesses us by thinking well of us and we bless God by thinking well of Him. When the Lord says in His heart, “This people shall be blessed,” before ever He has stretched out His hand to give anything, we are blessed by His favorable regard for us. I beg you, in the same respect, to bless God by sweet, holy, adoring, loving, grateful thoughts of Him. Think well of Him who thinks so graciously of you! This, surely, is no task, no burden. Such thinking is the happiest exercise of the mental powers!

To think of what God has done for me—why, it makes my heart begin to beat more quickly than usual! My God! The very word is music! My Lord! How pleasant the sound! How sweet it is to speak of our Father who is in Heaven! “How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God!” To turn over thoughts of what God is, what He has done, what He has been, how He has dealt with us, how He has revealed Himself unto us, how He has glorified His holy name—why, this is a heavenly pleasure!

Some of the best moments of devotion I have ever been able to enjoy I have spent in entire silence—looking up. I sat still and wondered that God should ever love me and I found a dew gathering about my eyes. I thought of how He loved me and what that love had worked in me and for me, till, not venturing to speak, I have been content to be silent before the Lord in inexpressible rapture. It was not possible for me to see Him, but yet I felt that He was very near and I looked up to Him as my Father, my Friend, my All in All. My heart felt an inward glow under a sense of Divine love and I could not have been happier if I had possessed 10,000 worlds. Oh, this is blessing God, whom your heart, not venturing to use words, has learned with every pulse to beat His praise and with every throb to mean an inward love to Him.

Spend some time in that quiet, rapt devotion which gets beyond the use of words into a communion of gratitude and love. Words are weak when Love has to load them with her treasures and therefore she is content to spare them the burden. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” My soul shall do what my tongue cannot! Think deeply of what the Lord has done. Do not pass His mercies over superficially, but look into them. Pry into their very heart—look into the deep things of God. Do not cease to think of the Covenant of electing love, of everlasting faithfulness, of redeeming blood, of pardoning Grace and all the ways in which Eternal Love has shown Himself since that day when you first heard Him speak in your ear, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” To think well of God is one of the chief ways in which we can bless Him.

We also bless God when we wish Him well . You can do a great deal in this way of wishing well and desiring great things for the Lord’s honor and glory. God’s wishes are all practically carried out. We cannot carry out ours, but, at the same time, we ought to indulge them freely. He that taught us to pray bade us begin, “Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.” Our prayers are not sufficiently directed to the glory of the Lord. How seldom do we begin with praying for God’s name and kingdom! We put that last which should always be first.

We ought to pray far more than we do for the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it not written, “Prayer also shall be made for Him continually and daily shall He be praised”? Do you continually pray for Jesus and daily praise Him? Pray for yourself, certainly, “Give us this day our daily bread.” But this comes after, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done.” Sit down and wish that all men knew God, that all men worshipped Him—and let your wishes blaze up into prayers. Wish that all idols were abolished and that Jehovah’s name would be sung through every land by every tongue. Wish well for His name, His glory, His Truth.

Lay home to your hearts the burden of His Church and long for the success of its work. When you see His Truth dishonored and His Word, itself, defamed and despised—be grieved, for this is a way of blessing Him—when you abhor all that dishonors Him. Wish well for His Church, His cause, His Truth, His people and all that concerns His glory. Pray without ceasing, “Father, glorify Your Son.” Turn your wishes into prayers and as the first stage of thinking well is a blessing of God by meditation, so this second stage of wishing well will be a blessing of God by supplication. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

Think well, wish well. Then, next, you can bless God by speaking well of Him. Perhaps you say very little about Him. Chide yourself for your reticence. Perhaps you have even spoken against Him though you are His child. I mean that you have fallen into such a state of heart that you imagine that He deals harshly with you. Ah, this is the opposite of blessing Him! Perhaps you have lost your husband or child, or in health or property you are a sufferer—and it may be that the devil says to you, “Curse God and die.” Surely you will not listen to this vile suggestion! No, no! A thousand times, “No!” Beloved, if you are His child, far be it from you to curse your Father! And yet, in a modified sense, you may do it by inward quarrelling with the will of the Lord in His Providential acts towards you.

God’s people provoke His Holy Spirit when they murmur against Him in their hearts. A murmuring spirit is the very reverse of blessing the Lord— especially when the murmurs take a loud voice—when they are not merely choked and concealed within the bosom but when, every time you speak, you complain bitterly of how the Lord deals with you and think that He acts in a very harsh and trying way. Away with every rebellious though! “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” “He has not dealt with us after our sins.” “Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” said Jeremiah in his Lamentations.

Let us lament for sin but let us not complain because of chastisement. Indeed, some of us have nothing to complain of. We have everything for which to praise Him and if we do not do so we deserve to be banished to the Siberia of Despair. How can we complain? If we are not in Hell, everything is mercy! If you, a pardoned sinner, had to spend the rest of your days on earth in a stone cell with no food but bread and water, performing the labor of a convict, yet, so long as you know that you are pardoned and delivered from going down to Hell, you have a thousand reasons why you should bless the Lord and you have no single reason to complain! So long as you can say, “His mercy endures forever,” you have enough cause for unceasing praise.

But when the Lord gives you all things to enjoy. When He gives you food to eat and raiment to put on. When He allows you to come up to His house in peace and hear the Gospel—and have it sweetly applied to your own heart—why, Beloved, you ought to speak well of the Lord who deals so bountifully with you! Have you said anything to praise God today? “I have had nobody to speak to,” says one. Do you mean to say that you have not said anything today to the Lord’s praise? What? My dear Brothers and Sisters, have you been silent all day? You are a rare sort of people! How quiet your houses must be! You have said something, I am sure. Do you not think that God ought to have a tithe of our words, at the very least, and that somehow or other, to somebody or other, we ought to speak well of His dear name every day?

“I have nothing to say,” says one. Do not say it, then. But some of us have a great deal to say and we dare not be silent about it! The wicked speak loudly enough against God. You cannot quiet them. Why should we be silent in any company? We have as much right to speak for God as they have to speak against Him! If they ever complain of people singing hymns in the street they have little cause to find fault—for they sing in the street quite enough—and some of them at very unseemly hours. If they say that we impose our religion—some of them impose their blasphemies and assuredly we may take as much liberty as they take! We shall not be muzzled like dogs either to please the world or its master. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul!” Speak well of His name and let men know that you have a God who is gracious to you in a wonderful manner.

Once more—be not satisfied with thinking well and wishing well, and speaking well—but act well for God. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and as He blesses you with real gifts—with gifts unspeakably precious—bless His name by acts and deeds of holy service and consecration. Sometimes indulge yourself with the delight of breaking an alabaster box, very precious, and pouring its fragrance on your Lord Jesus. Fetch out something rare and costly from your store and give to His cause, and bless His name. Every now and then think to yourself, “I must do something fresh for Jesus.” Let your heart say—

*“Oh, what shall I do my Savior to praise?”*Invent for yourself some little thing which may give pleasure to the Lord that He may not say to you, “You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices.” “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” and do it with hand, purse, substance and sacrifice.

If you do truly bless Him, you will not be content with singing hymns such as—

*“Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel,”*  
but you will long to put a feather or two into the wing of the Gospel to make it fly abroad! You will not only say, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name,” but you will be wanting to make that name known to others! You will endeavor to spread abroad His praise by work in the Sunday school, or at the village station, or on the tract district, or at the Dorcas Meeting! Bless the Lord not in word only, but in deed and in truth, even as He blesses you! “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

I cannot enlarge farther. I have given you hints, bare hints, but they may show you how you may bless the Lord after the manner in which He blesses you, though the measure is far below what He does. As the whole heavens may be reflected in a drop of water, so may infinite love be mirrored in our affections.

II. And now, secondly, let us consider THE COMMENDABLE MANNER mentioned. Half the virtue of a thing lies in the way in which it is done. Indeed, there is usually a good deal more in the manner of an action than in the action itself. One person would relieve a poor man in such a way as to break his heart and another will give him nothing and yet cheer him up. You can praise a man till he loathes you and censure him till he loves you.

Now, in the service of God, it is not only what you bring but in what spirit you bring it. The Lord loves adverbs as much as adjectives. How is as important as What. So here it is, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” That mode of blessing God to which we are called is very spiritual—a matter of soul and spirit. I am not to bless God with my voice only, nor merely with the help of a fine organ or a trained choir. But I am to do it after a far more difficult manner. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

Soul music is the soul of music. The music of the soul is that which pleases the ear of God—the great Spirit is delighted with that which comes from our spirit. Why? Surely you do not think that even the music of the best orchestra, majestic though it is, affords pleasure to God in the sense in which sweet sounds are pleasing to us! As for all human melody, it must seem so imperfect to the All-Glorious One that it is no more to Him than the grating of an old saw to Mozart or Beethoven!

His idea of music is framed on a far higher and nobler platform of taste than ever can be reached by mortal man. The songs of cherubim and seraphim infinitely exceed all that we can ever raise, so far as mere sound is concerned—and mere sound is as nothing to God. He could set the winds to music, tune the roaring of the sea and harmonize the crash of tempests! If He needed music, He would not ask of human lips and mouths! A heart that loves Him makes music to Him! A heart that praises Him has within itself all the harmonies that He delights in! The sigh of love is to Him a lyric! The sob of repentance is melody! The inward cries of His own children are an oratorio and their heart-songs are true hallelujahs! “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

The unheard of man is often best heard of God. Speechless praise—the heart’s deep meaning—this is what He loves. Spiritual worship! Spiritual worship! Spiritual worship! And how often this is neglected! You can go to a very fine Church where there is a very grand service and there may be spiritual service there but, alas, it is

 more probable that there will be no trace of it. You may go to a Quaker’s room where there are four bare whitewashed walls and a window with a Holland blind drawn down and there may be spiritual worship there—but, on the other hand, there may be stolid indifference and a formalism as fatal as the gorgeous ceremonial.

It is neither the outward sumptuousness nor the plainness that will ensure spirituality. And yet this is the life of all worship. Only the conscious Presence of the Spirit of God will enable us to worship with the soul—and that is the main thing—yes, the only important thing! I do not greatly care whether a man wears a plain coat or a gown in worship. I shall not make a fool of myself by putting on a gown, I assure you! But I do not think that even if I did it would make much difference so long as my heart was right in the sight of God.

If one man feels that he can worship God best in one way and another feels that he can worship Him best in another way, it is not for his brother to judge him—let each have his own way—only let each see to it that he worships God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth! This is the vital point—the heart must be in every word—the spirit must go with every note. Everything which does not arise from a devout exercise of the mental powers and even with the full occupation of the spiritual faculties, falls short of that to which we exhort God at this time. The right note is, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” It is spiritual worship—it is worship not from the teeth outwards, but from the heart that lies deep within the man.

When we bless God, the sacred exercise should be intense. “All that is within me, bless His holy name.” We ought not to worship God in a halfhearted sort of way as if it were our duty to bless God and we felt it to be a weary business that needed to be taken care of as quickly as we could and have done with it—and the sooner the better. No, no! “All that is within me, bless His holy name.” Come, my heart, wake up and summon all the powers which wait upon you! Mechanical worship is easy but worthless! Come, rouse yourself, my Brothers and Sisters! Rouse yourself, O my Soul! “All that is within me, bless His holy name.”

What we need is a universal suffrage of praise from every member of our manhood’s commonwealth. Every faculty within our nature is to praise God—our memory, our hope, our fear, our desire, our imagination—all our capacities and all our Graces. There is not one part of a man’s constitution which is really a part of his manhood which should not praise God. Yes, even the sense of humor should be sanctified to the service of the Most High! Whatever faculty God has given you, O my Soul, it has its place in the choir! Summon it to praise! If Nebuchadnezzar praised his idol god with flute, harp, sackbut, dulcimer, psaltery and all kinds of music, mind that you praise your God with every faculty that you have within you so that there is no part or power of your nature which is not used in Jehovah’s praise.

What a difference there is between an unconcerned man and a man really awakened! In your own case I can believe you to be bright and intelligent—but your portrait—I will say nothing about it. When the photographer fits that iron rest at the back of your head and keeps you waiting 10 minutes while he gets his plates ready, why, your soul goes out of town and nothing remains but that heavy look! When the work of art is finished it is you and yet it is not you! You were driven out by the touch of that iron! Another time, perhaps, your portrait is taken instantaneously, while you are in an animated attitude—while your whole soul is there— and your friends say, “Yes, that is your very self!” I want you to bless the Lord with your soul at home as in that last portrait!

I saw a book today where the writer says in the preface, “We have given a portrait of our mother, but there was a kind of sacred twinkle about her eyes which no photograph could reproduce.” Now, it is my heart’s desire that you praise God with that sacred twinkle—with that feature or faculty which is most characteristic of you. Let your eyes praise Him! Let your brow praise Him! Let every part of your manhood be aroused and so aroused as to be in fine form. I would have your soul rise to the highwater mark! Give me a man on fire when God is to be praised! Let “all that is within me bless His holy name.”

God is not to be half praised. A whole God and a holy God should have the whole of our powers engaged in blessing His holy name. Our blessing of God must be intense—so intense that all our powers, faculties and forces are unanimous in it. The text seems to remind me that we ought to do this repeatedly, because in my text the word “bless” occurs twice. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, bless His holy name.” And in the next verse there is, “bless the Lord,” again. He is a Triune God—render Him triune praise! Bless Him! Bless Him! Bless Him—be always blessing Him!

How you have looked at that dear child at times, you loving mothers! You have pressed him to your bosom and you have said, “Bless him, and bless him, and bless him again.” Shall our children enjoy such affectionate repetitions and will we not bless God and bless Him and bless Him, and bless Him again? “Oh,” you say, “it is a very little thing to do!” I know it is little in itself, but take care that you do not rob Him of it. If your gratitude can only render a small return, this must not be a reason for withholding it. Thank Him! Praise Him! Bless Him!

Begin your days with blessing Him. Begin your meals with blessing Him. Go not to your beds without blessing Him. Wake not in the morning without blessing Him. Even in the dead of night, if you lie sleepless, still bless Him. Oh, what happy lives we should live if we were always blessing Him! Let us resolve to institute a new era and from this hour commence the age of praise—

*“I will praise Him in life; I will praise Him in death; And praise Him as long as He lends me breath.”*

May this be the holy resolution of every blood-bought one in this assembly! We are all needed for this work. Who among us would like to be excused from so honorable a service?

Thus have I shown you the blessed occupation and the commendable manner of it. May the Holy Spirit help us to love praise and live praise till we perfect praise!

III. But I ask your attention earnestly for a minute to a third point and that is THE SACRED OBJECT of this blessing. The text is, in the original, “Bless Jehovah, O my Soul.” In the reading of the Psalms, as a rule, I frequently put the word, “Jehovah,” before you instead of, “the Lord,” for you know that wherever we get, the “LORD,” in capital letters, it is “Jehovah” in the original—and why should we not know that the sacred name is used by the inspired writer?

I am afraid that a great many so-called Christians do not worship Jehovah at all. The god of the present period is a new god, newly sprung up. The Old Testament is looked upon by some as if it were a worn-out Book and the God of Israel is regarded as a deity of the olden time and not the only living and true God. “Ah!” they say, “He is a very imperfect Revelation” and then they go on to reverence their own effeminate version of the Godhead.

For my own part I know nothing of a new god. I adore the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God that made the heavens and the earth. I worship the God that cut Rahab and wounded the crocodile at the Red Sea—the God that led His people through the wilderness. I worship the God that gave them the land of Canaan for a heritage. “This God is our God forever and ever. He shall be our guide even unto death.” “Bless Jehovah, O my Soul.” Let who will worship Baal or Moloch—let who will turn to the gods of Greece or Rome. My Soul, bless Jehovah and adore His sacred name! The gods of evolution and agnosticism are none of mine!

These invented deities, or demons, I leave to those who dote on them. Be it mine to lead this great congregation with such a Psalm as this— *“Before Jehovah’s awful Throne,  
You nations bow with sacred joy  
Know that the Lord is God alone;  
He can create, and He destroy.”*

But the text says, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” What is meant by blessing His name? The name of God is that by which He reveals Himself, so that the God we have to worship is the Jehovah of Revelation. Here, again, we fall foul of many. They worship the god of reason—the conception of the cultured mind—the god whom they have invented for themselves by their great wisdom. The god whom men find out for themselves is not the true God. I think that this day it is true as in Paul’s day, “The world by wisdom knew not God.” “Can you, by searching, find God?” As well might you search for the springs of the sea as expect to find God by science !

I often hear people say, “They go from Nature up to Nature’s God.” It is a very long step—too far for human strength! Stand on the highest Alp and you will perceive that you will never step into Heaven from there. It is far easier to go from Nature’s God to Nature and far safer to believe in Him who stoops out of the heavens and reveals Himself to you. However, let me say to all Believers—“Bless His holy name,” that is, bless the God who is revealed to us and bless Him as He is revealed to us.

Do not look around you for another god. Begin with the God with whom the Bible begins. Read its first word—“In the beginning God.” Begin with the God with whom the New Testament begins in the Gospel of John—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Keep to Revelation. There is God’s name spelled out in capitals! Believe the inspired Word, for it will never mislead you. O Friends, if I did not believe in the Infallibility of Scripture—the absolute Infallibility of it from cover to cover—I would never enter this pulpit again! If it is left to me to discriminate and to judge how much of this Book is true and how much false, then I must, myself, become Infallible, or what guide do I have?

If my compass always points to the north I know how to use it—but if it veers to other points of the compass, and I am to judge out of my own mind whether it is correct or not—I am as well without the thing as with it. If my Bible is always right, it will lead me right—and as I believe it is so, I shall follow it, God helping me! I will not judge the Book—the Book judges me—

*“This is the Judge that ends the strife,  
Where wit and reason fail.”*

God has revealed Himself in different ways and manners through His Prophets and Apostles, and as such let us bless Him tonight. We rejoice in Him who, in the Person of the Lord Jesus and in the Scriptures of Truth has graciously unveiled His face. “Bless His holy name.”

But then notice that the Psalm dwells especially upon one point. “Bless His holy name.” Now, a babe in Divine Grace can bless God for His goodness, but only a grown Believer will bless God for His holiness. His holiness is an august attribute, an attribute which comprehends all the rest, for it means His wholeness, His perfection, His holiness. It is an attribute which looks darkly on sinful men. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, it seems to thunder and lighten against the sinner. But as for those of us who are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, it smiles upon us!

These see holiness resplendent in the great Sacrifice of Calvary, for they perceive how God would not ever pardon sin so as to violate His justice, but in His infinite holiness would sooner die Himself upon the Cross than that His Law should not be vindicated! Saints conspicuously see God’s holiness! Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, we worship You! We bless You! Beloved, do you love a holy God? Do you bless a holy God? While you bless Him for His mercy? Do you equally bless Him for His holiness? You bless Him for His bounty, but do you feel that you could not thus bless Him if you were not fully aware that He is perfectly righteous? “Bless His holy name.”

Yes, when that holiness burns like fire and threatens to devour the guilty, let us still bless His holy name! When we see His holiness consuming the great Sacrifice we bow before the Lord in deep dread of soul, but we still bless His holy name. An unholy God? It were absurd to think of such a Being! But a thrice-holy God—let us bless and praise Him! When men or women can say, “We love and bless and praise a holy God,” there is something of holiness in them! God the Holy Spirit has begun to make you holy—since to appreciate holiness you must yourself be holy! No man can see the beauty of holiness until his eyes have been washed in the river of the Water of Life—and if God has made you pure so that you can praise His holiness—He has given you to be a partaker of His holiness!

So I have put before you in a few words the Truth of God that the one blessed Object of your praise is the God of Abraham—the God of the Old and New Testaments—who has revealed His name, the God of perfect holiness. “Bless Jehovah, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

IV. I have done when I add this fourth point. Let us remember THE SUITABLE MONITOR. In the text a suitable monitor appears. A Christian man who wants somebody to look after him is a very imperfect Christian man, for he who has the love of God in his soul will look after himself. Who is it that says to David, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul”? Why, it is David talking to David. The man speaks to himself! Beloved, may my voice be useful to you at this time—but the proof of it will be that from now on your own voice will suffice and you will often give yourself the exhortation—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

Some of you go out preaching or you teach a class in a Sunday school. Keep on with that but do not forget to look after one pupil of yours who needs your care very greatly. I mean, look to yourself and every now and then say, “My Soul, bless the Lord.” Where are you, now? You have been grumbling of late. Wake up and say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” You have been dull and cold-hearted of late. Chide yourself, for this will not do. If you have this monitor, you will have one that is always at home. You will not have to send across the road for a minister. Here is a spiritual chaplain who will be resident with you and always ready with his personal advice.

Will you not try to practice your ministry upon yourself and begin at once to apply to yourself all that you would say to another whom you would excite to bless the Lord? Ought you not to do it? Are you not afraid of growing cold in this holy service? “No,” you say, “I am not.” Then I am afraid that you are cold already! “No,” you say, “I am full of life.” Will you always be so? Man’s security is the devil’s opportunity. Whenever you say to yourself, “All is well with me,” I fear for you! A foul fiend is watching for your halting and he laughs as he sees how you delude yourself! You are not all you think you are! Stir yourself and praise the Lord!

Practice this praising of God when you are stimulated by the example of others. If you hear others praising God, say to yourself, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” Do not let any man praise God more than you do. When you see your Brothers and Sisters aglow with praising God, do not grovel in the dust and moan, “Our souls can neither fly, nor go to reach eternal joys,” but stretch your wings and rise to hallelujahs! Rest not till a gracious example has stimulated you!

But if you happen to be where there is nobody to stimulate you and where everybody goes the other way, then praise God alone. Say to yourself, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul. I dwell among lions. But none the less for their roaring, bless the Lord, O my Soul.” That will stop the lions’ mouths. What if you are in prison, like Paul and Silas? Bless the Lord! Nothing shakes prison walls and breaks jailers’ hearts like the praises of the Lord! Here I am where everybody doubts the holy God. Bless the Lord, O my Soul and be all the firmer and all the bolder! If everybody sneers at Divine Truth, bless the Lord, O my Soul. Let all men know that there is one in the world who does not sneer at Revelation! Let opposition be like a strong blast to make the furnace seven times hotter. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.” What have I to do with whether other people bless God or not? I must praise Him all the more if others are dumb before Him!

This, dear Friends, is how it ought to be from me personally. If I do not praise the Lord the stones in the wall will cry out against me—and it will complain of you, also, if you are silent. You owe Him more than many. If all forget, yet you remember. This is pleasant as well as profitable. Praise is not medicine—it is meat and drink. It is salutary and it is also sweet. Is any other occupation comparable to blessing the Lord? Is there anything that you can do which surpasses the spending of your life in magnifying the Lord?

If you practice it, it will be profitable to you. It will make you grow in Divine Grace. It will make your burden light. It will make your way to Heaven seem short. It will make you fearlessly face the world. If you have God within your heart and you are blessing His name, you will not mind your outward circumstances. Whether God gives or takes, you will continue to bless Him. This will be useful to you in saving others. A praising heart is a soul-winning heart. If we bless God more we shall bless our neighbors more. A happy Christian attracts others by his joy.

Lastly, to bless God will prepare us for Heaven. Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By Grace we learn to sing and in Glory we continue to sing. What will some of you do when you get to Heaven if you go on grumbling all the way? Do not hope to get to Heaven in that style! But now, begin to bless the name of the Lord! I have not spoken thus to all of you. Some of you cannot bless the Lord as yet. Will you try? Think how sad it is to be in a state of mind in which you cannot render acceptable praise. You must be born-again before you can bless the Lord. May the Lord convince you of the necessity that He should bless you before you can bless Him!

May you receive His blessing in a moment by faith in the Lord Jesus! The Lord grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.  
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 103.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—174, 146 (FIRST VERSION).

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:  
BELOVED READERS—My New Year’s wish for you is this—May the Lord bless you, and may you bless the Lord! To this end may the sermons ever be helpful! Beginning the 36th Volume, I feel grateful and hopeful. For the past and the future I would bless the Lord—for the one received by experience—for the other grasped by faith. May 1890 be the best year we have ever lived!  
Mentone, Dec. 27, 1889.

Yours, for Christ’s sake, *C. H. SPURGEON.*  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1108 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PLENARY ABSOLUTION  
NO. 1108

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”  
Psalm 103:12.**

WE shall aim at no novelty tonight, nor shall we try to serve up the old Truths of God in any new and attractive forms. Upon your tables you always require bread and generally you account salt to be indispensable. Some kinds of food are presented to us over and over again and it would foretell ill for our health if they were not always relished. It was an evil lusting which made Israel tire of the manna. An Israelite in his right mind found it to be still a dainty, though he ate of it every day of his 40 years’ pilgrimage. Who tires of the verdure of the fields, the light of the sun, or the air we breathe? These things are ever fresh and new, and ever necessary to us. The doctrine of forgiving love is one of those necessities of daily life concerning which it may be affirmed that if we should set them before you every day we should not be guilty of vain repetition.

None need fear of tiring man, or vexing God’s Spirit by harping too much on this string. Therefore come we to our favorite theme tonight. To speak of the great Gospel truth of the forgiveness of sin in the simplest manner we possibly can is the purpose we have immediately in view. To babes, to young men and to fathers in Christ, this all-important Truth will be equally precious, while the poor trembling sinner who cannot yet claim to be one of the sacred family may be encouraged by it. Our text has in it a word of peculiarity, and to this I call your attention at the outset. It is not every man in the world that could truly use the language of this verse, for it does not refer to all mankind—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

A people separated and set apart, a people upon whom there has been a peculiar world of Divine power, a people whose experience of the Grace of God towards them has melted their hearts with devout gratitude—such as these can sing this joyous stanza—but none beside. I will describe these people to you. I should gather from the ninth verse that they are a people who have been made truly, deeply, painfully conscious that they are sinful and have felt the chidings of God in their conscience—therefore it is that they say, “He will not always chide.” They know that God is angry with sin. They have felt some biting of that wrath upon their spirit and they have been humbled into contrition, repentance and confession— therefore do they now say, “Neither will He keep His anger forever.”

They are a people who have keenly realized the desperate condition they were reduced to—who know that if forgiven it must be through mercy—and through mercy only. They know that they have no claim upon God. They understand that they deserve to be cast away from His Presence—therefore they say, “He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” They are a people who have tasted of that surprising mercy which baffles all human thought and excites the adoring wonder of all who contemplate this darling attribute of the Most High. They have gone to Jesus, in whom the mercy of God is treasured up. They have believed in Him and they have received mercy through Him, for mercy comes to men through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And having tasted of that mercy, they say, “As the Heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.” Then they go on to sing, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Oh, priceless gift! Oh, matchless blessing! Say now, out of this vast throng, how many of us have been made to feel that sin is sinful, to loathe it and to confess it with bitterness of heart? How many of us have fled to the great atoning Sacrifice and have believed in Jesus to the saving of our souls? So many may repeat this verse and affirm it of themselves, with truth, but no more. Separate yourselves, then— let the force of conscience now be exercised, and let this text be to you, for a moment, like the Throne of Jesus before which He exercises the prerogatives of His Gospel sovereignty and divides the sinners from the saints, making men either tremble or rejoice.

Our text has a word of positiveness. In this song the Psalmist speaks of the pardon of sin as a positive fact. He celebrates it in grateful strains as a matter of certainty to himself and to others associated with him. David was an optimist of the right sort. Ifs and perhapses would not suit him. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” He does not indulge in fond hopes, or express vague wishes, or point in hesitant tones to some favorable omens—he speaks of his sins being forgiven, knowing it to be a matter of fact which there was no room to question. Now there are many professing Christians who do not think that you ever can know that you are forgiven while you remain in this world. They are not of this mind merely because they are ignorant of the Gospel, but because their gospel is beclouded with errors.

Their teachers throw dust into their eyes, or envelope them in mist. They see men as trees walking and no more. They are brought up in orthodox fashion to repeat a mournful litany and to call themselves, “miserable sinners,” in stereotyped phrases. They are taught to go on forever asking for pardon as if they had never received it. They are made to look upon themselves still as needing to be dealt with as lost sheep and reconciled as rebels. Their standing is always at the foot of Sinai. They are not taught that the Lord has forgiven us all our trespasses. Their church, as if to chasten it for its alliance with the State, has lost the jubilant tone of faith and made its daily service rather a wail for sinners than a song for saints.

Now the Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that there is pardon! That we may have it and that when we believe in Jesus, we have obtained full remission—that we are pardoned when we believe in Jesus—and that our iniquities are forgiven us! It is a matter signed, sealed, and delivered! It is a fact accomplished before the Lord and infallibly ascertainable by us. Sin is put away. Though we shall never be in such a condition, here, that we shall not have need to confess daily sin—for new sins will rise—yet, at the same time, the moment we believe in Jesus, no condemnation is upon us, nor ever can be! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” We are forgiven! Pardon is a fact—a fact most certain in the history of Believers. There is nothing more sure to them than this, that they are certainly forgiven inasmuch as they have believed in Jesus Christ!

I know there are many professed Christians who shrink with morbid apprehension from claiming this great act of God’s love as a benefit which they really enjoy. They venture to hope it may be so, but still they dare not speak with confidence of their own pardon. This, to their view, would be presumption. But is it not far more presumptuous to pay so much respect to your own misgivings as to totally ignore the blessedness of knowing that you are forgiven? Is it not awful presumption to settle down as so many do while their eternal state is a matter of question to them? Do you tell me that you do not know whether you are forgiven? Why, Sir, you are, indeed, in a wretched bewilderment! You do not know if you were to die at this moment whether you would be in Heaven or Hell!

How dare you sit in comfort in that seat? Dare you go to your bed in doubt about whether you are saved or not? How can you sleep? It seems to me to be profane presumption for a man to dare to be at peace till he is sure about his reconciliation to God. The presumption lies in settling on your lees, in resting short of the inheritance and in saying, “Peace, peace” to one’s soul when you know not that you are a saved man! Oh, I beseech you, if you have any doubts do not play with them! Do not trifle with your soul’s affairs! This is a matter about which there should be no doubt whatever! No man would like to have a doubt as to whether there is a thief in the house when he goes to his bed at night. You would not like to be in doubt as to whether a mortal disease is upon you.

You are anxious to be sure of your safety and your health—will you not desire to be as sure about your soul’s safety and the health of your inner nature? Surely you ought to be! But can a man be sure? Yes, assuredly. See right here—the best evidence in all the world is the witness of God, who cannot lie. Any number of men in the world bearing witness to a thing can never be equal to the testimony of God! What He says none may dare to question. God’s witness is much more reliable and has much more weight in it than the most exact observations and the most delicate inferences that can be drawn from them.

Suppose I can see a thing with my eyes. Men say, “Seeing is believing.” Yes, but eyes deceive, as everybody knows. There are many things we think we see which we do not see, after all. Eyes may deceive—God’s witness, therefore, is better than the sight of our eyes. “But surely,” says one, “feeling will not deceive you.” Alas, there is nothing in the world more deceptive as to a man’s state than his feeling. Those who are worst will often imagine themselves to be best and some of the best of God’s children have often felt in their humiliation as though they were the worst. I say, God’s witness is to be preferred above our feeling, our eyesight, or the witness of men!

What does God say? He says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Do I believe in Jesus? Have I been obedient to the other part of the command? God says I shall be saved and therefore I shall be, despite all the devices of Satan, despite all the sins I ever have committed or shall commit, despite anything and everything however unlooked for which may occur in time to come—for God’s witness must be true! “Let God be true and every man a liar.” God says it! “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Have I believed in Him, then? To believe is to trust—have I trusted my soul with Jesus? Yes, yes, I am sure of that. Then I am equally sure that I am not condemned, equally sure that sin is forgiven, because as sure as I possess faith, so sure is it that, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our transgressions from us.”

Who wants better evidence than God’s Word? O, we may live on it! We may die on it! And we may stand before the Judgment Seat with it as our strong consolation. God has spoken it and His Word cannot be impugned, or His counsel invalidated. But, because we sometimes are troubled and vexed within, there is another assurance which God is pleased to give to His children. Over and above His written Word, He gives them the inward witness. The man who has believed in Jesus feels a deep peace in his soul. “Jesus died for me,” he says. “Then if Jesus died in my place, my sin is put away. God will not be so unjust or inconsistent as to punish me for the sin for which He put Christ, my Substitute, to grief. If Jesus suffered in my place, I shall not suffer.

It were not just, that two should suffer for the same sin. The Believer, knowing this, finds satisfaction, smells a savor of rest and feels peace. O, what a peace! Believe me, there is nothing like it in this world—it is the peace of God which passes all understanding—a peace like that which rules amid angelic thrones. Then, in the midst of that deep calm the Holy Spirit comes down like the dove brooding over the waters, the calm and quiet waters of the Believer’s soul, and bears witness with the man’s own spirit that he is born of God. The man’s own spirit bears witness in the peace it feels. Then God’s Spirit comes and sets a seal and the man knows and is persuaded by the witness of God in the Word—and the living witness of God in his soul—that as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed his transgressions from him!

Some of us remember the very day and hour wherein our sins were put away and can look back to the date and call it our spiritual birthday. It shall be to us the beginning of days, even as was that day in which Israel came out of Egypt. And others, who have not so distinct a recollection of the time—yet as they look to yonder Cross and see the Incarnate God bleeding on it—feel that their transgressions are blotted out, and as they look they get a renewed assurance of complete absolution. There are some, I know, who think it best always to gaze upon their crucified Lord, as if they had never before looked upon Him. They stand and hug the Cross, kiss those bleeding feet, look up to that dear face bedewed with drops of grief and that dear brow crowned with thorns, and say, “You are my Savior! Dear lover of my soul, I rest in You! Your side riven for me yields me my pardon. Your death is my life. Your life in Heaven is the guarantee of my immortality.”

O happy they who can so stand at the foot of the Cross and always feel that as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed their transgressions! None can sing so heartily and joyfully the high praises of God—

*“Since I have found a Savior’s love,  
To Him my hopes are clinging.  
I feel so happy all the time  
My heart is always singing.  
A light I never knew before  
Around my path is breaking  
And cheerful songs of grateful praise  
My raptured soul is making.  
I feel like singing all the time,  
I have no thought of sadness  
When Jesus washed my sins away  
He turned my heart to gladness.”*

Now, Brothers and Sisters, as we return to our text, I would have you notice the comprehensiveness of it. I do not find any list of sins here. All I find about sin is contained in these two words, “our transgressions.” I am not skillful in matters of common Law, but I remember hearing a lawyer make this remark about a man’s will, that if he were about to leave all his property to some one person, it would be better not to make a recapitulation of all that he had, but merely to state that he bequeathed all to his legatee, without giving a list of the goods and chattels, because in making out the catalog he would be pretty sure to leave out something and that which he left out might be claimed by someone else. Indeed he gave us an instance of a farmer, who, in recounting the property he left to his wife, intending her to have had all, actually omitted to mention his largest farm and the very house in which they lived. Thus his attempt to be very particular failed, and his wife lost a large part of the property.

We do not want too many particulars, and I am thankful that in this verse there is a broad way of speaking which takes in the whole compass of enumeration. “He has removed our transgressions.” That sweeps them away all at once—“our transgressions.” If it had said “our great transgressions,” we should have been crying out, “How about the little ones?” We should have been afraid of perishing by our lesser faults even if the huge crimes were pardoned. Suppose it had said “our transgressions against the Law”? “Oh, but,” we would have asked, “What shall we do with our transgressions against the Gospel?” Suppose it had said, “our willful transgressions”? That would have been very gracious. But we would have said, “Ah, but what will become of our sins of ignorance?” Suppose it had said, “our transgressions before we were converted”? Then we should have exclaimed, “Ah, but how shall we escape from our sins since our conversion?”

But here it is—“our transgressions”—He has removed them all, all, ALL! From the cradle to the tomb—they are all gone! Sins in private and sins in public! Sins of thought, word, deed—they are all removed! The moment you believe in Jesus they are all, all, all gone! I cannot help giving you a picture I have sketched before, when Miriam the Prophetess, Aaron’s sister, with her timbrel in her hand went forth, the women of Israel following her, dancing by the Red Sea. As they looked over the dark waters of that mighty sea, there could not be discovered the crest of a single Egyptian captain. Not one solitary horse straggling for its life, nor a chariot, nor a banner, nor any implement of war. Nor one solitary champion that had borne arms! Therefore she struck the timbrel, and the damsels sounded it out aloud—“The depths have covered them. There is not one of them left— not one! Not one! Not one! Not one of them left!”

I think I hear their song. I think I see their feet twinkling like stars as they dance forth their joy and Jehovah’s praise—“There is not one, not one, not one of them left!” Even thus do I look upon Jesus’ precious atoning blood and think of all my sins and yours, my Brothers and Sisters, who have believed in Him, and I shout with equal, if not greater joy, “The depths have covered them! There is not one, not one of them left! He has removed our transgressions from us.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Another thing which claims special note in the text is the perfection—the absolute perfection of the pardon. The text says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Can anybody tell how far the east is from the west? You begin to calculate, perhaps, upon the surface of the globe, but I say, “No, not so. The east is farther off than any distance you can travel on this globe. Look to yon sun.”

Then you begin to measure within the bounds of the solar system towards the east. But I say, “No. The solar system is but a speck in the universe. I must have larger measurement than that.” “We will measure space, then,” says one. Space! What do you mean by that? Do you mean all that has ever been seen by the optic glass of the astronomer when he has gazed at night upon the milky way? Ah, but that is only a corner of boundless space! I must have the infinite measured and you shall go that way with your line to the east, and I will go this way with my line to the west—and you shall tell me how far the two are asunder. Why, the interval is boundless! It means an infinite distance!

Now God has taken His people’s sins away from them to an infinite distance, that is to say, there is no fear that their sins should ever return to them—they are gone, gone, gone, gone completely! I do not know how it is, but some of our friends of a certain school of theology believe that after men are pardoned they may yet go to Hell. I will never quarrel with them about that doctrine. If it gives them any comfort, they are welcome to it. It does not seem to me worthy of a God, or even of a man! Poor is that pardon which may yet be followed by eternal torment! If God has pardoned His people, surely no fresh proceedings can be opened, no subsequent indictment preferred against them! “Who lays anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

I have heard of the Duke of Alva pardoning a man and then hanging him. But I do not believe God ever trifles, thus, with mercy. If He has pardoned my soul, then I am saved. If He has done it once, He has done it forever. He has removed my transgressions not a little way, but, “as far as the east is from the west.” I think that means just this, that the pardon of our sin is so complete that when a man is pardoned he never can be punished for his sin—not in any measure or degree. He becomes a child of God and, as a child, he may be chastened, but he will never have to stand before God as his Judge and be called to account for those sins—for they are not—they do not exist! “Strong language,” you say. I say it again, they do not exist, for Jesus Christ has “finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.”

What does that mean? “Made an end of sin”? Why, it means what it says and sin is made an end of! No soul, then, for whom Jesus bled, who has believed in Jesus, being redeemed from sin can ever be punished for his sin before the bar of Divine Justice. Christ has been punished for him and his sins are gone. “But, though not punished for sin, may not a man suffer some disadvantage? If God will not send me to Hell, yet, at any rate, it may be He will not love me so much because I have been a sinner. He will not treat me as if I had never fallen.” Yes, but when God wipes out sin, He puts away all the consequences of sin. “But do we not feel the consequences in our bodies?” Yes, assuredly, but it is for a season only and for loving reasons. Our mortal bodies are doomed to death and they are full of pain, sometimes, but they shall not always be so. Our bodies shall rise again and there shall be no detriment through sin upon those bodies!

They will be just as glorious as they would have been had God made them perfect in the garden of Eden. Man, they will be even more so, for they shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus! But

upon that I will not stay. At this day God loves us and He will love us forever. He loves us infinitely and He could not love us more than that if we had never fallen. At this time, in Christ Jesus, we are brought near—I will say it—as near as if we had never sinned, yes, and nearer! I do not see how, if we had never sinned, we could have been so near as we now are for, had we never sinned, there would never have been a Mediator and Jesus might never have been, “Immanuel, God with us.” But now we poor sinners have One who is our Brother, who is very God of very God, even Christ, the Son of Mary, and yet the Son of Jehovah!

This is a wonderful nearness which God has given us! We are made His children. We are made to come into His immediate Presence and to taste of His love! Our sins are so effectually removed that we shall not ultimately suffer any loss or damage through having sinned. That detriment was laid on Christ. His was the loss—ours is the gain. His was the tremendous suffering—ours is the unutterable joy—

*“Your blood, not nine, O Christ,  
Your blood so freely spilt,  
Has blanched my blackest stain  
And purged away my guilt.  
Your righteousness  
My soul does beautify,  
Wrapped in that glorious robe  
Your Father I draw nigh.”*

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, this is what the Lord means, also, when He tells us He has put sin away “as far as the east is from the west.” He means that He has forgotten it. Can God forget? Well, we speak of the Nature of God, sometimes, after the manner of men, and rightly so if we adopt those forms of Revelation which have been vouchsafed to us. We rightly regard everything as in His remembrance, because He dwells in all ages and everything is present with Him. And yet if He tells us He forgets we may not venture to disbelieve Him.

But I do not inquire just now what our conceptions of God may be— enough that we should cordially receive what He would have us believe. Here is a text—“Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever.” That is God’s own assertion. He knows His own memory and He has put it so. Let me repeat those words. They melt my own heart while I speak them, and therefore I hope every child of God will feel the sweetness of them. What inconceivable love! What force, what pathos, what Grace there is in every syllable!—“And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever.” O, blessings, blessings on His dear name for such a Word as that!

Has He not said, “I have blotted out, like a cloud, your transgressions”? Has He not said, in another place, “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”? That is, they shall vanish as colors fade—they shall disappear and shall no longer exist. These are glorious Truths of God. I want every child of God to endeavor to realize the fact that at this very moment his sins are gone—effectually, completely, perfectly gone—through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! Beloved, there is in the text a ray of Divinity full of hope to us—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” God is the great Remover of sin!

There are some who, when they feel the guilt of sin weighing heavily on their conscience, go to a priest and ask him to remove the burden. The theory they act upon is this—that the priest is ordained of God and has received power from the Most High to declare and pronounce absolution in God’s name. They think it too great a thing for God Himself to deal personally with men and, therefore, He employs some ordained person to speak in His name. Now, I have no doubt that there are many persons who get a good deal of comfort from the declaration of the priest that they are forgiven. I cannot understand how they can be so wretchedly duped, but I suppose the manner of administering a sacrament may be so imposing as to stifle any enquiry into the prerogative which the “Father Confessor” pretends to exercise.

And yet I know, on the other hand, that there are some who, after they have obtained that kind of absolution, are not so comfortable as they expected to be. They feel somehow or other as if it did not quite meet the case. Perhaps such a person may have dropped in here. You want to know that your sin is forgiven by a greater authority than the lips of any mortal can impart. O may the Lord Himself put away your sins and your heart will know it and be at rest! To some people these scruples will cause the most agitation just when they looked for the most tranquility—and if they are God’s people and God is working in their hearts, I am sure of this— that 50,000 priests could never give them an assurance that could make them feel true peace or heart’s ease.

They would still be disquieted, still be troubled, even if Bishops and Popes should pronounce them absolved. God’s voice, alone, can still the tempest of their souls. See how the Romanist is pursuing phantoms all the while that he is following the directions of his church and observing her laborious ordinances. He never reaches the goal of peace! He can never be free from anxiety in life or apprehension in death because his church never speaks to him of perfection through the one Sacrifice offered once and for all. And when he dies he does not know where he may go. He conceives himself to be really forgiven, after a sacerdotal fashion, but he is not so divinely pardoned but that he has to go to “purgatory” for a time, to be purged from spots which still remain!

He is never certain where he is with regard to the bar of Divine Justice. His pardon, at the best, is not worth having as a guarantee of Heaven. In most cases the most religious Papist only goes to “purgatory,” a place which certain of their ablest writers say is so cold on one side that they are all frozen like the inhabitants of the arctic regions—and then the victims are tossed to the other side, which is so extremely hot that it is as

though they were being baked alive! So they are tossed about from one side to another till sin is either frozen or dried out of them. This is a fine prospect for good religious Romanists! The statements of Romish theologians as to the purgatorial regions are even more grim and terrible, for in some such imaginary place the remainder of sin is to be put away!

But, Beloved, we have it in the text that God is to remove our transgressions! O what a removal is that! Hands off, you priests! You are too feeble for such weights as ours! Our sins are too stupendous for your puny strength! But the Lord comes with His own right hand of majesty, puts away our sins and lifts them on to Christ—and Christ comes and flings them into His sepulcher and they are gone and buried forever—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”—

*“He seized our dreadful load, our guilt sustained;*

*And heaved the mountain from a guilty world.”*Our transgressions were against the Lord our God—to Him, therefore, belongs the right to pardon them! These transgressions had done dishonor to His Holy Name. He has a right, if He wills, to put them away if He can do so without tarnishing His Glory.

By the Substitution of Jesus, Justice is satisfied and God Himself blots out our sins. And here is the beauty of it—since the Lord has removed our transgressions from us, the thing is done completely and it is done forever and forever! What a man does, he may undo. You know how some men are like children—they will give a thing and take a thing back, and so play fast and loose with you. They will speak well of you today, and say, “Yes, they forgive,” but they cannot forget! They remember again tomorrow, revive their old resentments and, in their anger, call up, again, past grievances. Not so, our God. “I am Jehovah! I change not,” says the Lord, “therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” When God removes transgression, the work is so done that it never shall be undone—certainly not by Himself—and if not by Himself, who, then, can do it? My Brothers and Sisters, what consolations you have since you have believed in Jesus! I pray you, feast upon them and be satisfied to the fullest!

Our text has in it also a touch of personality for each one of us. I has pondering upon this passage the other day and it came to me with a peculiar sweetness—not on account of any of the thoughts I have given you, but on account of this—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from”—himself [David]? Yes, that is true, but it is “from us,” from us. And this was what passed through my mind— then my sins are gone away from me, from me! Here am I, fretting that I am not what I should be, and groaning, and crying before God about a thousand things! But, for all that, there is no sin upon me for, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

From ourselves the sins have gone! From us, as well as from His eyes. From His book and from His memory—they have gone from us. “But I committed them,” says one. Ah, that you did. Your sins were yours, yours with a vengeance! It was like that fiery tunic which Hercules put on, which he could not drag from him, let him do what he might, but which ate into his flesh and bones. Such were your sins. You could not tear them off! But God has taken them off, every one of them, if you have believed in Jesus. And where is that tunic of fire now, which would have devoured you forever? Where is it? You shall search for it, but it shall not be found, no, it shall not be, says the Lord. It is gone away from you! I sometimes see Believers troubling themselves as if all their sins were laid up in an iron safe in some part of the Lord’s house. It is not so! It is not so!

They are fretting as though somewhere or other there were a horde of sins in ambush which would accuse them and bear witness against them before God’s bar, and so they would be condemned after all. It is not so! It is not so! They are all gone! They are all gone. Satan may stand and howl for accusers and say, “Come, gather together, and accuse the child of God!” And you yourself may tremblingly fear that they will come and therefore you will put on your filthy garments and come in before God, and stand there like a poor wretched criminal about to be tried. But what does Jesus say when He comes into the court? He says, “Take away his filthy garments from him! What right has he to put them on, for I have taken them away from him long ago by My Substitution? Take them off! Set a fair miter on his head. This is one whom I have loved and cleansed— why does he stand in the place of condemnation when he is not condemned and cannot be condemned, for there is now no condemnation since I have died?”

Ah, we many times go down into the hold of the vessel and there we lie among the baggage. And our doubts and fears fasten down the hatches and there we are—half stifled—when we might as well come up upon the quarter deck and walk there, full of delight and peace! We are moaning and fretting ourselves and all about what does not really exist. I saw two men, yesterday, handcuffed and marched to the carriage to be taken off to prison. They could not move their wrists. But, suppose I had walked behind them, with my wrists close together and had never opened my hands, nor stirred them, and said, “Alas! I committed, years ago, some wrong, and have handcuffs put upon me”? You would naturally say, “Well, but are they not taken off?” And I reply, “Yes, I have heard they are, but somehow, through habit, I go about as if I had them on.”

Would not everybody say of me, “Why, that man must be insane!”? Now you, child of God, once had the handcuffs on—your sins were upon you— but Jesus Christ took them off. When you believed in Him, He broke all your fetters and now they are not there. Why do you go about trembling and saying, “I fear!—I am afraid!” What do you fear, O Man? What do you fear? Are you a Believer and afraid of your old sins? You are afraid of foes which do not exist! Your sins are so gone that they cannot be laid to your

charge. Do you not believe this? Can you not rise to something like the true estimate of your position? You are not only pardoned, but you are a child of God! Go to your Father with joy and thankfulness and bless Him for all His love to you. Wipe those tears away, smooth those wrinkles from your brow—take up the song of joy and gladness and say with the Apostle Paul—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Be glad in the Lord, you pardoned ones!—

*“Shout, Believer, to your God!  
He has once the winepress trod.  
Peace procured by blood Divine,  
Cancell’d all your sins and mine.  
In your Surety you are free,  
His dear hands were pierced for you.  
With His spotless vesture on,  
Holy as the Holy One.  
Oh the heights and depths of Grace!  
Shining with meridian blaze;  
Here the saved records show  
Sinners black but comely too.”*

As for you who have never received that pardon, does not the mention of it make you long for it, cry for it and beg for it? O that you would, above all, believe for it—for it is to be had by you. The guiltiest of the guilty shall have forgiveness if they believe in Jesus! Whoever among you will trust in the crucified Savior shall be pardoned this night! The moment you trust Him you shall have a full acquittal for all your sins and crimes. Yes, all transgressions, and you shall sing, as our poet Kent does—

*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast,  
And O my Soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come here’s pardon too.”*

God be praised! Let His Word be believed! Let His name be trusted and then He shall be praised! Amen.  
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 103.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1650 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S FATHERLY PITY  
NO. 1650

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 2, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:13.**

IN the former part of this Psalm, the Psalmist sang of God’s deeds of love, His gifts, His benefits and His acts of kindness. But here he goes deeper into the Divine motive and, therefore, he finds sweeter incentives to devout gratitude. There is a fullness of consolation in the fact that the heart of God is towards His people. He not only dispenses blessings—so does the sun, so do the clouds, so do the fruitful fields—but He takes a warm interest in our welfare and has a feeling towards us of kindly, gentle affection. And that of such intensity that one of the highest forms of earthly love is here used as a figure to set forth the tender mercy of our God towards us. I have always been taught as an axiom in theology that God has no griefs—that He is “without parts or passions”—I think was the definition. But I have often inwardly objected to such statements. They seemed to me so inconsistent with the tone and tenor of Scripture, for He appears to take pleasure in His people and to be “grieved” with their ill manners.

Surely, metaphors that are Inspired must have a meaning that is instructive! If the Father’s “heart yearns.” If our Lord and Savior is “moved with compassion.” And if the Holy Spirit is “vexed,” there must be something analogous to what we call emotion, among ourselves, in the acknowledged attributes of the Most High! At least He appears to sympathize with us, so that “in all our afflictions He is afflicted,” and He pities us, “as a father pities his children.” “That is speaking after the manner of men,” somebody says. True. And it is exactly the way I do speak. In no other way do I know how to speak! And until I learn to speak after the manner of angels, you must pardon me and accept an apology—not only for my own ignorance of any other tongue than that in which I was born— but also for the incapacity of my hearers to understand any other than human language.

Neither do I know anything, so limited is my intelligence, except after the manner of men. It seems to me that if there is any other manner or means of communicating thoughts and emotions, it must belong to some other being than man. And if it is correct to speak after the manner of men, then be it understood I do speak after that manner, and I am perfectly satisfied that I am able so to speak the truth as shall give a faithful and adequate impression to your minds. There is a feeling which has a measure of pain in it, familiarly known to us as, “pity.” It is a love which so sympathizes with its objects that, in a manner, it makes itself one with them—and if it should involve suffering, pity shares the pang. If there is any kind of grief in the one that is pitied, he that pities becomes a partaker of that grief.

I believe in a God who can feel. As to Baal and the gods of the heathen, they may be passionless and without emotion, or without anything that is akin to feeling. Not so do I find Jehovah to be described. How did His anger kindle when He gave His people over to the sword and was angry with His inheritance! And how transporting is His love to the daughter of Zion when He rejoices over her with joy! He has a pity, yes, and a sorrow, too, according to this Book. I dismiss, therefore, the theology of the schoolmen—I am quite satisfied with the Divinity that I find in these Scriptures! Believe it then, dear Friends, with all your hearts, that God has kindly feelings towards them that fear Him, such as a father has towards his children!

This is a Truth of God of which I feel jealous and I do not wish to see it toned down. There is a sentiment abroad that sounds plausible and is accepted by many Christian people, that God puts us to much sorrow, wisely and for our good, while His own heart is unaffected or callous to our suffering because He foresees, according to His own purpose, the good that will come out of it. Some kind of analogy might, in that case, be suggested between our gracious God and a skillful surgeon, who cuts and cuts deeply, when he would remove a cancer from the flesh. Or a physician who administers potent drafts of medicine, which, perhaps, cause excruciating pain. The surgeon would be too intent on the success of his operation, or the physician would watch with too much anxiety, the effect of his prescription on the patient to bestow much thought or sympathy on those present sufferings which he confidently anticipates will effect a permanent cure.

So he calmly looks on, intent upon the result in the future, as he ignores, to some extent, the anguish of the passing hour. But I pray you not to think that it is exactly so with God. Of course, in a higher scale, He has all the wisdom of the physician and He views our afflictions that we now endure in the light of that hereafter when He will heal all our diseases, give unto us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Still, He does not steel His heart to the immediate and the present trouble of His people, but, “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

I can understand the surgeon looking at the patient, while causing him acute pain under the operation, with the bravery of a man whose nerves cannot easily be shaken. But the father must leave the room! He cannot bear it. The mother cannot look on—they are carried away with the immediate grief. And so it is with God, albeit that the splendor of His wisdom and His foreknowledge enable Him to see the end as well as the beginning, yet, believe me, like as a father is pitying his children, so the Lord is pitying them that fear Him! For it is in the present tense and carries the idea of continuity—at this very moment He is pitying them that fear Him! Though He knows your trials will work for your good, yet He pities you! Though He knows that there is sin in you, which, perhaps, may require this rough discipline before you are sanctified, yet He pities you!

Though He can hear the music of Heaven—the songs and glees that will ultimately come of your present sighs and grief—yet He still pities those groans and wails of yours, for, “He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” In all our distresses and present grief, He takes His share. He pities us as a father pities his children. Let us look at the text, then, believing in its meaning and not frittering it away by saying, “That is after the manner of men.” For again, I say, there is no other manner in which we can speak and no other manner in which God, Himself, can speak if He means us to understand Him.

There is, doubtless, some high and vast meaning which, like the covering cherub, stands high over all, but, for all that, I am but a child and cannot reach it. I am content with what I can reach; satisfied with what is obviously the meaning of this text, “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Hear it, dear Friends, first, for your encouragement, and hear it, next, for your imitation. Hear it that you may be encouraged! God is not unfeelingly afflicting you, but He is pitying you! Hear it that you may be impelled to go into the world with a like pitying eye. If you ever have to say a rough word in fidelity, or are required to utter a stern rebuke, do it after the manner of your heavenly Father, pitying even if you have to blame, and gently delivering the expostulation which it grieves you to have to deliver at all!

I am not, tonight, able to preach to you much by way of set discourse, for I am one of those children, just now, who needs his Father’s pity! I half think He would have bade me go home and not speak to you at all, had it not been that the sight of this assembly stirs my spirit and makes it imperative that when you come together to hear, I should have something to say to you—therefore, as best I can, I shall simply call attention to some things in our condition and our circumstances which make us resemble children towards whom God has pity. Will you please observe, on the outset, that the pity of the Lord extends to all those that fear Him. There are none of them that are not fit objects of His compassion—the very best and brightest of His saints, the brave heroes, the well-instructed fathers, the diligent workers—God pities you, my dear Brothers and Sisters! Will you take that home to yourselves because there is a beautiful lesson of humility in so accounting ourselves as pitiable creatures in the eyes of the Lord—even when we are at our best estate.

I have seen some Brothers and Sisters that really did not seem at all good subjects for pity because they imagined that the very roots of sin had been eradicated out of their hearts. Their character and their conduct were akin to perfection in their own esteem. I forget how many weeks they had lived without a sin except they had some wandering thoughts, once or twice—but they could hardly remember or refer to that as a fault! Yes, but I venture to say I pity people that talk so! If they are God’s children, all that God does with them is pity them and well He may, for He says to Himself, “Poor dear creatures! How little they know of themselves and how different their estimate of perfection is from Mine!” He still pities them, but that is as far that He goes. I do not find Him admiring them or exalting and extolling them. The biggest child He has, the child that is most like His Father and has learned most of Jesus, may come to this text and see himself depicted in it, “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

As for us who are not so big and are still among His little children, I am sure the Lord, first, pities our childish ignorance. He is not angry with us because we do not know everything. He is not angry with us because the little we do know we mostly turn topsy-turvy, upside down. He is not angry with us because what He has taught us we are very apt to forget by reason of our fickle memory. No—He pities us! Schoolmasters of the olden type used to think that the boys must do all the lessons that were given them and learn everything that was contained in their school books. Then they asked them questions which, if the pupils could answer, there would be no need for any teachers. But if the boys did not know the answers, there was nothing for them but a fierce word and a hard blow!

That is not how fathers teach—true fathers—but when their children do not know, they tell them. If they cannot quite understand them, they watch their faces and they put the thing into another shape. And if the child has not got it then, they try again and, at last, they find the keyhole of the child’s understanding and put the key in! And straightway the mind is opened and the truth, like a precious treasure, is stowed therein! A father does not act like a schoolmaster, but he pities his children and he is willing, patiently, to teach them. Does the father expect his child to know as much as himself? Does the politician expect the little boy to understand the secrets of the Cabinet? Does the tradesman expect his child to come into his shop and perceive the intricacies of his business? Certainly not!

And when the child makes many mistakes, at which others laugh and mock and make some bitter jest till the tears rise in his tender eyes and roll down his little cheeks, the father feels the affront and pities his child. He, too, smiles at the strange things—the freaks of the child’s mind—yet there is not an atom of scorn in that smile! He loves him too much to ever think of him in that way and he goes on to teach him more. “Why did you tell your child that piece of information 20 times?” asks one. “Why,” said the mother, “I told him 20 times because when I had told him 19 times he did not know it—so I went on to 20 times.” And that is how God does with us! He has taught, some of us, 19 times and we do not know it—so He will teach us 20 times, for He pities us.

Oh, if He were to treat us as some lads have been treated at schools— where they dismiss a boy as incorrigible, too dull, too stupid ever to shine—some of us would have been turned away long ago! But He takes us, dull scholars as we are, and He tires not of teaching, as He gently insinuates one Truth after another—not too much at a time—for He says, “You cannot bear them now, though I have many things to say unto you.” And so by degrees He does get a little into us. Blessed be His name for that little! It is worth all the world! One thing 1 know, whereas I was blind, now I see! I have got that drilled into me. To know Him and to know something of the power of His Resurrection, and something of conformity to His death—these are lessons we are going on to learn with a sweet prospect of being taught yet more and more! And we need never fear of being dismissed because of our dullness, for, “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

Let us take a word of admonition from this instance of pity before we go any further. Do not let us think that we have not the privileges of children because we do not know as much as more experienced saints, or because we cannot engage in the devotion at Prayer Meetings, or conduct a Bible class, or, perhaps, can hardly understand the creed of the Church well enough to give a clear account of it! Do not let us think our heavenly Father does not love us; that He will refrain from keeping His eyes upon us, or cease to watch our growth in Grace and in the knowledge of Christ until He shall have more fully instructed us. Do not let us begin to condemn those of God’s children that do not know as much as we do. We have not got far ourselves.

Still, there is a tendency in some to say, “Why, this cannot be genuine Grace, for it is accompanied with such little knowledge.” Well, now, if that suspicion shall lead you to give more instruction, it is well! But if it shall lead you to set aside the uninstructed one, it is evil. In the Church of God it behooves us to have the same pity on the ignorant as our heavenly Father has shown towards us in our ignorance—and we ought to have even more, seeing He has no ignorance of His own and we have much! Let us, therefore, be very compassionate and exceedingly pitiful towards those of our Brothers and Sisters who as yet know but little.

Another thing in which our heavenly Father shows Himself pitiful to us is in our weakness. Children cannot do much; they have but little strength, especially little children too young, too helpless to run alone. The mother does not despise—she rather dotes on the babe whose little body is a burden she has to carry because it cannot walk. Her heart is not hardened against her infant because the wee baby is unable to help itself! Our heavenly Father knows our weaknesses! Some of you know something of your own lack of strength. You are bowed down under a sense of your infirmity tonight. Now, do not let your weakness lead you into any unbelief or mistrust of God. He knows our frame—He remembers that we are but dust. An infant’s incapacity never excites a parent’s ire. You, being evil, know how to be tender with your offspring—how much more shall the Father of Spirits sympathize with such weakness as He knows we are all prone to experience!

Possibly the weakness that distracts you comes from languor of body. I have been, sometimes, so sorely sick as scarcely able to pray, that is to say, not to express my desires in a consecutive prayer. And I remember one who said to me, “I appeal to you, as a father, were your child suffering from a fever, his mind wandering and his speech delirious, would you reproach him because he did not address you just as he has been accustomed to do when he was in health?” I felt I should have rather commiserated his sickness than complained of his frenzy. Neither will our heavenly Father deviate from the instincts that He has implanted in the nature of His creatures! He has revealed to us as an illustration of His own emotions toward those that fear Him!

If you who have been accustomed to guide your class in their studies, cannot find anything instructive to teach them. Or if you are a minister and it should seem to you that the tide runs out when you looked for your thoughts to flow freely—and that the words fall frozen when you hoped they would fire volleys from your lips—there may be some rational solution for your languor. If there is any wrong in your heart or in your habits, you may well blame yourselves! But if it is pure weakness—whether it comes from the body or from the mind that you are weary, disorganized, depressed and bowed down—do not think of aggravating your distress by self-reproach, but hear the text say, “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

Some of our Brethren seem to think we are made of cast iron. They would have us preach all day and all night long. At times they are so thoughtless as to make use of very bitter language when some servant of Christ cannot, through physical or mental weakness, do all they want of him. “So-and-So does it,” they say. A man in perfect health and strength may joyfully accomplish what another man cannot even think of undertaking. So are God’s servants misjudged by the sterner sort. But they are not misjudged by God, for He pities the weakness of His people and blames them not! I wish I could speak a word that would be encouraging to any here that would go about Christ’s service if they could, but cannot.

I remember John Bunyan’s little picture of the man that is sent for the doctor and he has to go on a horse. He has to go as quickly as he can, but the horse is a sorry jade and cannot go very fast. “Oh,” he says, “look at the man, how he kicks, how he tugs at the bridle and his Master knows he would go if the horse would only carry him.” Under such circumstances the messenger could not, surely, be to blame! So sometimes God sees the efforts of His servants to work for Him. Why, they would drive the Church before them and pull the world behind them if they could! And if they do not seem to be able to do it, does He blame them? No, verily, but He pities the weakness of them that fear Him! We will go a step further now. In children there is something much worse than ignorance and weakness—and that is their childish follies. There are some persons who have a great affection for children and find great pleasure in being with them by the days together.

I confess I find a larger portion of pleasure when they are out of the way. Perhaps it is because I need quiet and stillness that I am better able to bear with them a little at a time. But there are persons who seem to take a delight in all their childish pranks and game, and all their romps and frolic. Well, that is good, and I hope you will have plenty of it, you that like it. But the father is the one who can bear with his children when other people cannot. I have occasionally been in houses where I have felt that I was glad the father could bear with them, for I did not feel inclined to be very patient with their play, myself, however proper I may think it for young people to be lively! And you know a father and mother will put up with a thousand little things in their children that strangers would frown at.

Those dear, kind mothers, with a little tribe about them—they do not seem wearied and worn out! And if anybody says, “Oh, look what he is doing.” “Ah, well,” says the mother, “he is only a boy.” “Oh, but see that girl.” “Oh, well, she is so young, she must have her little frolics.” There are all sorts of excuses made on their behalf and it is right enough that it should be so. It is not weakness in the child, it is just childishness. And when we were children, we did the same, and others bore with us—and so parents bear with their children. But oh, how God our Father bears with us! We think we are very wise—it is highly probable that we are never such fools as when we think we are displaying our wisdom! We think we are pleasing God, sometimes, and in that very act we are displeasing Him, though we know it not! There are sins in our holy things—oh, how strange must some of the things that we do seem to our great God! We have gotten so accustomed to them! We have seen them in others. We have come to put up with them in others and others put up with them in us!

Now, we who talk, sometimes, about our doubts and fears, why, there must be much in them that must be very depressing to the mind of the great Father. Do we doubt Him? Do we distrust His promises? We try to make out that we do not, but if you sift it thoroughly, it does come to that! Oh, the Father knows that we do not mean it; that we shrink in a moment from the idea of making Him to be a liar! And if anybody else were to put forward the very doubt which we have been entertaining, we should be horrified with it! And I believe it is a great part of our heavenly Father’s pity that He should thus look on us and often construe what we do in such a kind and tender way. You know how Jesus prayed for His murderers—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And the Son is very like the Father—our Father does the same with us—He forgives us because we “know not what we do.”

It was very beautiful of our Lord, even with Pilate, to say, “He that delivered Me unto you has the greater sin.” It was the best He could say for Pilate, that though his sin was great, yet there was a greater. And our Father has all those kind thoughts ready, we may be sure, for His children’s wild and wayward deeds. Jesus had them ready, even, for His most fierce and wicked adversaries. Yes, He pities our follies and still bears with us! But children have something worse than follies—they have faults to be forgiven. Now, our Father pities the faults of His children and He shows His pity by this fact—that He has provided for their cleansing and He freely gives them the use of that provision—and readily forgives them their iniquities.

A good child, when it has done wrong, is never satisfied until it gets to the father and says so, and asks the father’s forgiveness. Some fathers, perhaps, think it wise to withhold the forgiving word for a little time and so may our great Father. But as a rule is it not wonderful how readily He forgives? He does, for a little time, perhaps, make us smart under the sin, for our good, but it is not often. As a rule, the kiss is on our cheek almost before the confession has left our lips! Oh, have we not gone to Him and we have thought, “He will chasten me for this. I may expect to be put in the dark and to be without communion with Him for many days.” But we have just ingenuously opened up our heart and told Him that we grieved—and asked Him to make us even more grieved that we might hate the fault—and never fall into it again. And almost at once He has said, “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities; go and sin no more.”

Do you not think that Peter ought to have been thrown out of the Church a good long while after denying his Master with oaths and cursing? Well, perhaps he would have if we had been consulted in the matter, but when Jesus Christ was here on earth, by a kind look or a gentle word He could set very crooked things straight! So we see Peter in company with John and the rest of the Brothers within two or three days of his committing that serious trespass. The Lord is very ready to forgive—it is the Church that is unmerciful, sometimes, but not the Master—He is always willing to receive us when we come to Him and to blot out our transgression. Come along, then, you that have erred and gone astray, you backsliders that are sensible of sin—you, His children that did walk in the light but a few days ago, and have got into the dark by some sad slip— come along!

You are very ready to forgive your children, are you not? Do you not remember, you that are too old to have them about the house, how readily, in your younger days, you picked up your little ones in your arms and said—“Dear Child, do not cry any more, you must not do it again, but father fully forgives you this time”? Just so does your heavenly Father wait to pick you up and to press you to His bosom and say, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Not, “with a love that can soon be set aside by your fault.” “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore, I will blot out, again, your transgression—and set your feet on a rock and strengthen you to sin no more.” Oh, it is a sweet, sweet thought—our Father pities us in our faults!

Go a step further. A father’s pity tenderly lifts up those that fall. When your child falls down, as children are very apt to do, especially when they first begin to walk, do you not pity them? Is there a nasty cut across the knee? It cries and the mother takes it up in her arms, directly. And look, she has some sponge and water to take the grit out of the wound! And she gives a kiss and makes it well. I know mothers have wondrous healing lips! And sometimes, when God’s servants do really fall, it is very lamentable. It is very sad and it is well that they should cry. It were a pity that they should be willing to lie in the mire! But when they are up again and begin crying, and the wound bleeds—well, let them not keep away from God, “For as a father pities his fallen children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Have you come in here tonight with that cut knee of yours? I am sorry you should have fallen, but I am glad that our blessed Master is still willing to receive you! Come and trust in Him who is mighty to save, just as you did at first, and begin, again, tonight! Come along! Some of us have had many times to begin again. Do the same! If you are not a saint, you are a sinner—and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Put your trust in Him and you shall find restoration and, maybe, through that very fall you shall learn to be more careful—and from now on you shall walk more uprightly to His honor and Glory!

But how the pity of a father comes out to a child in the matter of pain! With what exquisite tenderness a child’s pains are soothed by a parent! It is very hard to stand by the bedside and see a dear child suffer. Have not some of you felt that you would gladly take your children’s pains if they might be restored? You have one dear one at home now, the tears are in your eyes as I mention it—a life of suffering she has. Well, it may be others of you have children who have mental troubles—the body is healthy, but the little one has a fret and a worry. I hope you sometimes have seen your children weeping on account of sin—it is a blessed grief, and the sooner it comes, the better. In such a grief as that, as, indeed, in all others, I am quite sure you pity your children. So does your Father pity you! Broken heart, God’s heart is longing to heal you! Weeping, weeping for your transgressions, the Father longs to clasp you to His bosom.

Tried child of God, you that are often despondent and always ailing, God would not send this to you if there were not a necessity for it! And in sending it, He shares it as far as this text goes—and it goes blessedly far, for He pities you! Sometimes hard-hearted persons do not pity those that suffer and some forms of suffering do not awaken sympathy. But all the sufferings of God’s people touch the heart of Jesus and sympathy comes to them at once. I know some of you say, “I am quite alone in the world and I have much sorrow.” Please revise that hard saying! You are like your Master, of whom it is written that He said, “You shall leave Me alone: yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” Your Father is with you!

I wish you had some Christian friend to speak with you as a companion, but in the absence of such a social confidant, there is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother! And there is One above who is a Father to you. Oh, believe it, there is no poverty, there is no reproach, there is no sorrow of heart, there is no pain of body in this world among them that fear God, but what the Lord sees it and knows all about it, and has a pity to them that endure it! Still passing on, our children have our pity when anybody has wronged them. I have heard say that there are some men that you might insult, almost with impunity, and should you even give them a blow they would stop to ask the reason before showing any resentment. But, if you put a hand on their children, you shall see the father’s blood come up into his face and the most patient man will, all of a sudden, become the most passionate!

There was a livid blue mark where you struck the child and the father looks as though he could forgive you if that were on his own body—but on his child? No, that he cannot endure! He turns it over and over and he cannot resist his indignation, that his child should be wantonly made to suffer! The wrongs of children call loudly for redress in the ears of every sensitive man or woman, but they are sure to awake a thrilling echo in a father’s heart. “And shall not God revenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?” I tell you that He will avenge them speedily, though He bears long with the adversary.

That cry of Milton’s—when he prayed God to avenge God’s elect among the valleys of Piedmont for all the accursed persecutions of the Church of Rome—was certainly heard and answered! Look at Spain to this day— degraded among the nations because she was chief in the army of inquisitors and crushed out the Word of God from her midst. She cannot rise, the blood of saints is on her! And other nations, too, that have shed the blood of the righteous like water, have had to smart for it. That revolution in France, when blood flowed at the guillotine, was God’s reply to St. Bartholomew, for He remembered it and took vengeance for His saints! And so He will till the end of the world shall come! There is no wrong done to His people but it is registered in God’s archives. “He that touches you touches the apple of My eye.” Christ seemed to sit still in Heaven till He saw the blood of His saints shed. And then He stood up as in indignation when they stoned Stephen. You remember how He cries, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” It was Jesus that suffered, though His saints were made to die. Leave, then, your wrongs with God. “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord,” and let your reply be always gentleness and kindness towards those who hate you for righteousness’ sake.

And now, once more, the father will pity his children so as not only to set right their wrongs, but to remove his children’s dreads. There are some people in the world that seem to take delight in frightening children with old bogey stories so that they hardly dare go out at night. But a kind father, if he finds his child frightened so, explains it all to him—he does not like to see him blanched with fear or haunted with terror. It may be that some here present are suffering, just now, because they are sorely afraid. Are any of you under a dread of some boding evil, as though the dark shadow of a calamity you cannot define were flitting before your eyes? Be sure of this—your heavenly Father pities you!

There are some of our hymns that always speak of death as associated with pains and groans and agonizing strife. Very much of that is old bogey—

*“Imagination’s fool and error’s wretch,  
Man makes a death which Nature never made! Then on the point of his own fancy falls,  
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.”*

How many of God’s people have we seen die without pains or groans or dying strife! I remember one who used to be, all her life, subject to fear of death. She retired as usual to bed one night and when they went to call her in the morning, there she lay with a sweet smile upon her face—she had gone to Heaven in her sleep—it was evident she never knew anything at all about it. Are God’s people, by their observation of other saints, driven to conclude that death is always the terrible thing the world says it is? I think not!

There may be some whom God puts to bed in the dark, as we sometimes do our children, but usually He takes the candle with Him and sits and talks with His child till he falls asleep. And when he wakes up, there he is among the angels! God kisses the souls of His saints out of the bodies—

*“One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks—  
We scarcely can say, ‘they’re gone!’  
Before the ransomed spirit takes  
Her mansion near the Throne.”*

Go to your heavenly Father and tell Him you are frightened and He has ways of taking away these fears, for though they may be ridiculous to some, a child’s dreads are never too frivolous for the sympathy of a loving father! He meets them as if there were some great reality in them and so sets them aside. Whatever your needs, your woes, your griefs, fly away to your great Father’s Mercy Seat and spread them there and He will give you comfort! Believe, from this night forward, that God pities all them that fear Him and whatever He sees of weakness in their nature and of sorrow in their lot He will help them. So may you find it now and evermore, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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OUR HEAVENLY FATHER’S PITY  
NO. 2639

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY SEPTEMBER 10, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN 1857.

**“Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:13.**

WHAT a blow this is for our pride! Then God’s children are pitiable objects, notwithstanding that He has crowned them with glory and honor, has given them perfection in Christ Jesus, has breathed into them the breath of spiritual life, has set their feet upon a rock and established their goings—yet they are and they always will be, so long as they are here below—pitiable objects! It is like tolling the death-knell of all our pride to talk about God pitying us! Why, my Brothers and Sisters, we shed our pity profusely upon the ungodly—we are often pitying the wicked, the profane, the blasphemer and Sabbath-breaker—but here we find God pitying us! Even David, the mighty Psalmist, is pitied! A Prophet, a priest, a king—each of these shall have pity from God, for, “He pities them that fear Him,” and finds good reasons for pitying them, however high their station, however holy their character, or however happy their position! We are pitiable beings! Oh, boast not, Believer! Be not loud in praise of yourself! Put your finger on your lips and be silent when you hear that God pities you! The next time carnal security would creep in, or fleshly conceit would get the upper hand of you, remember that while you are boasting, God is pitying—and while you are triumphing, He is looking down upon you with pitying eyes of compassion, for He finds reason for compassion when you can only see cause for glorying!

Our subject then, Beloved, will be a review—a review of our lives—if we are the Lord’s children and fear Him. I hope it will be profitable to us. It will not be profitable through the newness of the thoughts, but rather by “stirring up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” to look back upon all the ways whereby the Lord your God has led you. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” First of all, notice the displays of this pity. Then, the spirit of this pity. And then, lastly, note the objects of this pity.

I. Notice THE DISPLAY OF THIS PITY. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” When does a father display pity towards his child? I answer—on many and divers occasions.

Sometimes, the father’s pity is bestowed upon the child’s ignorance. He, himself, knows a thing which is, to his child, a profound mystery. He knows a certain truth which is, to him, an axiom and an element of his knowledge. But to his child it seems like the apex of the pyramid of knowledge—he wonders how he can ever attain to so high a pitch of learning! And, oh, how foolish are the child’s surmises! How long he is guessing at truth and how mistaken are the axioms which he founds upon his mistakes of thought! And how the father pities the child if he falls among bad companions who teach him errors, who, instead of filling his mind with truth, fill it with lies! When he comes to his father with all those strange stories, with which wicked men have filled his little ears, the father pities him that he should be so ignorant as to be carried away by every wind of tattling—that he should receive every talker into his confidence and believe everything because man has said it, taking every man’s opinion and believing what any man declares to be right!

So, when, in the plentitude of our supposed wisdom, we think ourselves infallible, God looks down on our wisdom as being childish folly! When, in the glory of our wondrous eloquence, we talk great things, God looks down upon us as upon the prattler, who talks fast, but talks foolishly. And, often, when we come before our fellows and spread before them wondrous discoveries that we have made, He that sits in the heavens does not laugh in derision, but He smiles in compassion that we should think ourselves so wise in having discovered nothing, and so supremely learned in having found out untruths!

And how God must pity His dear family when He finds them led astray by false doctrine and error! How many there are of God’s people who go up to houses of prayer, so-called, where, instead of hearing the Truths of the Kingdom of Heaven, they are taught all kinds of strange things— where they hear “another gospel, which is not another, but there are some that trouble them.” Where all the isms and fancies of man are preached, instead of the Truth of God, in all its discrimination, in all its power, in all its constancy and everlastingness and the power of its application to the soul by the Spirit of God. How God pities some of His children who are thus led astray! One of them, perhaps, says of their minister, “Is he not intellectual? Is he not a wonderful minister? Though he said nothing about Jesus Christ, today, yet it was such a clever discourse! It is true, he did not preach God’s Gospel, but, then, see how beautifully he cleared up that point of metaphysics! It is quite certain that he did not lead me to hold more fellowship with my Redeemer, but then how excellent was that distinction which he drew between those two similar terms which he employed!”

Another says, “I never heard a man so clever as my minister! I will not go and hear any of those vulgar preachers who talk to their hearers in a way that servant girls and mechanics can understand. I like to hear my minister, for he is so profoundly wise, that I do not believe there are many people in the chapel beside myself who can appreciate him! I will still go and hear him, dear man, though he does puzzle me, sometimes, so that I do not know what on earth he is talking about, and when he has finished his discourse, it has been such a perplexing one, that I have lost my way, and said, ‘Dear me, the time is gone and I wonder what the sermon has been all about!’”

God pities His children when they are in this position. He does not pity them when they hear His Truth—when they have real Gospel fare, however roughly the meat may be carved, and however it may be served up on the coarsest platter that human speech can supply. He pities them not when they get such spiritual food as that—but He does pity them when they are misguided, when they are carried away by “philosophy, falsely so called,” being misled by the seeming wisdom of man which, after all, is but folly, having nothing of wisdom in it—the highest wisdom being that of believing what God has said, receiving God’s Truth simply as God’s Truth and asking no questions about it. God pities His children, however, in all their ignorance. He is not angry with them, nor does He speak sharply to them, but He leads them on by His Spirit until they understand His Truth and receive His Word.

It were well, however, if there were nothing else but ignorance to bear with, but the parent often has something worse than that to suffer from his child—he has to endure the disobedience and waywardness of human nature. There is the continual uprising of evil passions, the perpetual proneness to disobedience, the frequent wandering from the path of righteousness and, oftentimes, the father has to pass that by with, perhaps, just a little admonition, but without a frown, without a sharp word, without a blow—he has to say, “My Child, it is all forgiven you”—and though his temper may be sorely tried, yet he has patience with his child, for he pities the child’s disobedience. He knows, too, that he was once a child, himself, and then he did the same as his child is now doing and, therefore, does he have patience with his child and he pities him. My Brothers and Sisters, what pity has the Lord had upon you and me, in all our wanderings! How often have we gone astray and yet, compared with our wanderings, how seldom have we been chastised! How frequently have we broken His Commandments and rebelled against His Covenant and yet how light have been the strokes of chastisement, compared with the weight of our guilt, and how seldom has He afflicted us, compared with the frequency of our transgressions! How has He had patience with all our shortcomings and has bid His hand be still, when, if it had been like ours, it would have risen in hot anger to smite us to the dust! Truly, He has pitied us, “like as a father pities his children,” only with a far greater patience! Even as He is, Himself, infinitely greater than all earthly fathers, so has His pity been more continuous, more patient and more long-suffering than the pity of any human parent who has ever breathed.

And as a father pities his child, not only in all his disobedience, but in all his actual transgressions and downright sin—when he grows from the mere wish to do evil up to the actual commission of the crime—like as a father still pities his child, even when his follies have ripened into the worst of guilt, so has God pitied us, my Brothers and Sisters, when we have gone into gross sin before our conversion. Yes, and some of us even after it! When we have gone astray like lost sheep, have broken the hedges of His commands, and have gone rambling over the dark hills of transgression, still has He had pity upon us. It is amazing how far a father’s pity will go towards his child, even when he has transgressed ever so much. There are some who have shut the door in their children’s face and bid them never enter their house again, nor come near them. They have ceased to speak of them, for they have determined that they would never take their names on their lips again, nor consider them their children.

But such fathers are, I trust, very few in number. It is rarely that we meet with them. A father usually endures much, and endures long. After he has had the peace of his home destroyed and his gray hairs almost brought with sorrow to the tomb. After his family has been made a wreck and he has lost almost everything he had, by the profligacy of his son— still his love, tenacious to the last, holds to his boy and will not let him go. And even when others speak harshly of him, the old man palliates his son’s guilt—perhaps a little foolishly—but if he can find an excuse for him, he does. He will not have it that his son is worse than others and he will allow no man to make his son’s guilt appear greater than it is—in fact he will, as far as he can, try to make it seem less.

Our Heavenly Father is not foolishly pitiful, but He is pitiful. Yes, and He is better than that! He is wisely pitiful over the most erring of His children. Our God is no Arminian god—the Arminian’s god is a pitiless god to his children. He is represented as being pitiful enough to all the world, but pitiless to his own children, for, according to the teaching of some, when they sin, he cuts them out of the covenant! And if they transgress, he bundles them out of doors, tells them they are not his children any longer and, because of their transgressions, he will have it that they are none of his and shall be damned at last, despite the fact that Christ has died for them, that the Holy Spirit has regenerated them and that they have been justified! He casts them away from his presence and they are to be lost forever! He is a pitiless god, but the god of these people is no relation to our God!

We do not believe in their god, nor do we fear him, nor bow before him. Our God is constant in His affection and merciful towards His children! When they go astray, He pities all their guilt and sin. It is true, He takes the rod in His hand and, sometimes, causes us to weep bitterly by reason of the soreness of His chastisement. He applies the rod to our very soul and brings the iron into our inmost spirit. He makes us smart, and cry, and groan, and sigh, but all He does is in pity because He is determined to save us. He will not let us go unpunished because He pities us for our folly and sin. Just as the physician will not let the man go without his medicine because he pities him in his disease, so God will not let His children go without His chastisement because He pities them in their sin. And mark, too, even that chastisement is one of pity—there is not one twig too many in the rod, nor one stroke over the right number, nor one drop of gall too much—and that drop is none too bitter. The affliction is all measured out and weighed in balances and scales, all given as it should be—no more than what is necessary. God pities His children in all their chastisement and pities them in all their guilt and wanderings— and He will not let them go away from Him altogether, nor will He suffer them to perish, for He pities them still.

God also pities His children in sickness. That is a time when a father pities his children very much. It does not say, “Like as a mother pities her children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” And I think the reason is not because a mother’s pity is less intense, or less affectionate—for it is more so, by far—but because it is sometimes less effectual than the father’s. A mother may pity her child, yet she may not be able to preserve it from an enemy. The mother may pity her child when it is sick, but she may be alone in the house and she may not be able to travel far enough to find a physician and, therefore, God has put in, not merely the affection, but the strength of pity. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” On the bed of sickness, the strength of pity is proved by Christ upon God’s people. He does not stand, as the mother would, to weep over the child, but He does more than that. He does give true compassion, He does sympathize, but, more than that, He heals! He makes the wounded spirit whole. He removes the aching pain from the conscience, binds up the broken heart, makes the weak to be strong and the faint one to rejoice! He gives us the strength of pity and some of us can remember that strength of pity when, in our sickness, we lay tossing in our beds, without hardly power to pray—when we said our heart and our flesh had failed us, and we must die. When our brain was racked with discordant thoughts and reason seemed to have left its throne, and blank despair held carnival within our brain, which, for a while, was under the dominion of the Lord of Misrule and revelry was perpetually kept up there. It was then, when we could do nothing, that Jesus came to us, not merely with the faint whispers of compassion, but with the strong voice of healing, bade our fears be still, comforted our aching heart and then made our flesh leap for joy because our spirit, its twin sister which had been broken on the wheel, was delivered from the tormentor and made perfectly whole! Thus the Lord pities His children! He specially pities us in all our sicknesses.

And, my Brothers and Sisters, your Heavenly Father pities you who are His children under all your manifold trials, of whatever kind they are, and from whatever quarter they proceed. Thus, when persecuted, you have had His pity—when the jeer and taunt of the ungodly have been cast upon you—and when worse than that has been attempted against you. When you have had to bear the brunt of poverty, you have had God’s pity shed upon you. And you have had a pity, too, that was not barely that of words—you have had the pity of help. He has given you your bread in your extremity and made your water sure when the brook was dry. You who have lost your friends and have had to weep over numerous bereavements. You who have mourned over your family who have been swept away, one after another, not once have you been bereaved without the pity of your God! Never once has the clay fallen on the coffin lid, with the sad message, “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” without the pity of your God falling on your heart, like gentle dew from Heaven! He has always pitied you in your low estate. He has always been with you in all your varied troubles and has never left you—

*“‘Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints”—*

He has kept by your side and led you all through your journey. And here you can raise your Ebenezer and write the words of our text upon it, “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him, and He has pitied me up to this hour!”

Yet once more, sometimes God’s people have wrongs and a father pities His children, if they have wrongs that are unrevenged. I know a father who sometimes says, “If you strike me, you may strike me again. I will turn the other cheek to you and you may smite me as long as you please. But,” says that good man, and he is a man of peace, too—like myself, a thorough man of peace, though a little inconsistent—“strike my children and I will knock you down if I can! I will not have you meddle with them. If you hit me, I will not resist you. You may do what you please with me. But if you smite my children, that I can never endure! I love them so, that I should break through every principle to resent it! So strong is my natural affection for them that though I might conceive myself to be wrong in what I did, I should do it, most certainly!”

Depend upon it, there is nothing that brings a man’s wrath up like touching his children! And the same thing is true of God. You may curse Him and He will not be so angry with you as if you touch His children. The prophet Zechariah declared to His ancient people, “He that touches you, touches the apple of His eye.” If any of you want to know the shortest road to damnation, I will tell you—despise God’s little ones! Treat God’s people ill and you will damn yourself by express! Remember our Lord’s words, “But whoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

There never was a wrong done to one of God’s people that God did not avenge! There has never been an ill deed done towards them yet but He has punished the doer of it. Though He suffered Assyria to break Israel in pieces, yet let Assyria speak, when she rises from her tomb, and tell how terribly God has shivered her with a rod of iron because she vaunted herself against the people of the Most High. Let old Rome testify that on her still rests the blood of the martyrs. Behold, our God has broken her empire in pieces! The Roman emperor has ceased to exist and his gaudy pomp is gone. Yes, and modern Rome, too, has an awful doom yet to come—she, above all other cities—has a fearful future before her. She, that is wrapped in scarlet and sits on the seven hills, the Whore of Babylon, drunk with the blood of the saints, shall yet meet the doom foretold in the Revelation. Lo! God has said it! She shall be torn in pieces! She shall be burnt with fire and utterly consumed! God might have forgiven her if it had not been for the blood of the martyrs—but the blood of His children cries out against her and the curse of God rests upon her! The Church of Rome can never again be put in the ranks of Christian churches! God has forgiven other Churches their sins and, despite errors in their doctrine and their practice, He has kept them among the living Churches. But of the Romish Babylon He has said, “She has made her garments red with the gore of My children; she has stained her hands with the blood of the saints; she shall be cut off, once and for all, and be forever cast away! Come out of her, My people, lest you be partakers of her plagues and share in her fearful doom!” God pities His children! No martyr has died unpitied, nor shall any martyr die unavenged! Springing from their graves, they cry, “Revenge, revenge, upon the apostate church of Rome!” And it shall be had. Lo! The souls of the saints beneath the altar cry, “How long, O Lord, how long?” Not long shall it be! The sword is being made ready in Heaven. It is furbished and the God that pities them that fear Him shall not let His hands spare, nor His eyes pity, when He comes to avenge Himself upon the church that has dyed its garments with the blood of His elect!

II. And now, dear Friends, leaving that part of the subject, I want you briefly to notice THE SPIRIT OF GOD’S PITY.  
There are different sorts of pity. Some I would not have at any price whatever. Did you ever see the pity of contempt? Have you not often seen a gentleman watching a poor man doing something or other, and then saying to him, “Poor fellow, I do pity you”? Have you ever seen a very respectable aristocrat who has never heard anything but the most “proper” kind of preaching, turn on his heels and go out of a Chapel door, saying, “Well, I do pity people who can listen to such stuff as that”? We have often seen that pity of contempt. But that is not God’s kind of pity! He never pities His people in the way of contempt and a father never so pities his children. Sometimes, when a boy is writing a copy, a stranger goes through the school and says, “Well, he is an ignoramus,” and he pities him, perhaps—but there is a sneer with his pity. But the lad’s father comes into the room. The boy has just got into pot-hooks and hangers and the father thinks he makes them very well for such a little boy. He pities him, perhaps, that he is not able to write better, but there is no contempt with his pity. Nor is there any contempt with God’s pity—He sees what we are and pities us—but there is not a solitary grain of contempt for any of His people in His pity.  
Other people’s pity is the pity of inaction. “Oh, I do pity you very much!” says a person to a sick woman, “your husband is dead, your children have to be supported and you have to work hard. Well, my good Woman, I pity you very much, but I cannot afford to give you anything. I have so many who call upon me.” How much pity there is of that kind in the world! You can get pity of that sort in abundance. If you lift the knocker of the first door you come to, you will get plenty of pity of that kind. Pity is the cheapest thing in the world if that is all. But God’s pity is not pity of that sort—it is not the pity which is mere pity, it is not the pity of inaction—but, when His heart moves, His hands move, too, and He relieves all the needs of those He pities.  
And let me say, again, God’s pity is not a pity of mere sensitiveness. The other day a gentleman, talking of accidents, said in my hearing, “I saw a boy running down a lane where a cab was coming at a very rapid rate. I saw that the boy must be crushed under the horse’s feet, or under the wheels. I stood for a moment thunderstruck and then I saw him crushed to pieces under the wheels! I ran down the next street in a moment. I was so sensitive, I could not bear the sight.” Instead of seeing what help he could give, he ran away. “Yet,” he said, “I did not do that from any lack of sympathy, or any lack of pity, and when I stopped myself, I thought it useless to go back, for I am so sensitive that I naturally avoid every sight of misery.” That is not God’s way of showing pity! His pity is not the pity of the stranger who ran away! God’s pity is the pity of the father—it is not the pity of the mere sensation of the moment, but the pity which desires to do something to relieve his children in distress— *“The pity of the Lord,  
To those that fear His name,  
Is such as tender parents feel—  
He knows our feeble frame.”*  
Then, tried Believer, take your case before your God tonight in prayer. He is a God of pity and not a God of man’s pity. Go to Him, now, if you are poor. Tell Him all your care and see if He will not help you. Go and tell Him that your spirit is depressed and see if He will not cheer you. Tell Him that your way is hedged up and that you cannot find your path, and see if He will not direct you. Tell Him you are ignorant and know nothing, and see if He will not teach you. Tell Him you have fallen and see if He will not set you on your feet, take you by the arm and teach you to go tell Him you are black by reason of your falls—and see if He will not wash and cleanse you. Tell Him that you cut yourself against a stone when you fell and see if He will not bathe your sores. Tell Him you are distressed because you have sinned and see if He will not kiss you with the kisses of His love and tell you He has forgiven you. Go and try Him, for His pity is a heavenly pity! It is the very ointment of Paradise that heals sores effectually!  
III. I close, by noticing THE PEOPLE WHOM GOD PITIES. Who are the objects of God’s pity? “The Lord pities them that fear Him.”  
Some of you He does not pity at all—you that do not fear Him, but trifle with Him. You that hate Him. You that despise Him. You that are careless about Him. You that never think of Him—you have none of His pity. When you are sick, He looks upon your sickness as something that you deserve. When you go astray, He looks upon your wandering as a mere matter of course of your guilty nature—and He is angry with you— wrathful with you! Your afflictions are not strokes of His rod, they are cuts of His sword! Your sins are not things that He overlooks, but if you die as you now are, guilty and unsaved, remember that even when you are cast away by God, justice shall look upon you with tearless eyes and say to you, “You knew your duty, but you did it not.” And the stern voice of God shall, because you have been desperately guilty, drive you away from His Presence forever! Think not that this text will afford you any consolation in this life, or in that which is to come! You shall not have even a drop of water to cool your tongue in Hell—no pity shall be shed upon you there. If you could have pity bestowed upon you in the regions of your punishment, it might fall like a shower of gentle rain upon your tongues. But God bestows no pity upon you that love Him not, fear Him not and turn not from the error of your ways.

Oh, that you would but fear Him! Would to God that He would make you fear Him now! Oh, that you would tremble at His Presence and then, oh, that you could know yourselves to be His children and fear Him as children do their parents! Oh, that you did reverence His name and keep His Sabbaths! Oh, that you did obey His Commandments and have His fear always before your eyes! Then should your peace be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Oh, that you were wise to bow yourselves before Him and to confess your guiltiness! Oh, that you would come, “just as you are, without one plea,” to Jesus Christ! Oh, that you were stripped of every rag of self-righteousness and clothed in the righteousness of Christ! Then you would have Christ as your Savior and you might rejoice that, henceforth, He would pity you in all your sicknesses and in all your wanderings! He would pity you here, and at last lead you up to be where pity shall be unneeded—in the land of the blessed, in the home of the hereafter where the weary rest and the wicked cease from troubling.  
But they do not cease from trouble in Hell. They are troubled without pity, pained without compassion, scourged without any leniency and damned without an iota of mercy, being left to stern justice and inflexible severity! Seeing that they would not turn at God’s reproof and would not heed His warnings, but cast His Truth behind their backs—seeing that, being often reproved, they hardened their necks—they were, therefore, “suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.” Seeing that they have destroyed themselves. Seeing that they have rejected the invitations of the Gospel. Seeing that they have despised the Son of God. Seeing that they have loved their own righteousness better than Christ’s and preferred Hell to Heaven, the penalties of iniquity to the reward of the righteous—therefore, without pity they shall be shut away, forever, from the regions of happiness and banished from the Presence of Him who pities them that fear Him, but punishes them that fear Him not! The Lord save us all from such a terrible doom as that, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 25.**

Verse 1. Unto You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. It is down and I would gladly lift it up, yet I am powerless to do so if I am left to myself. When the soul cleaves to the earth, who but God can lift it up? Yet it must be our desire and objective to seek to lift up our soul unto God.

2. O my God, I trust in You: let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. Whatever happens to me, I trust in You. Down goes the anchor—that ship will never drift far out to sea. “O my God, I trust in You.” Can you say that, dear Friends? Then if you are in the dark, you are as safe as if you were in the light, for still this anchor holds! “O my God, I trust in You.” “Let not my enemies triumph over me.” They will do so if they can get me back into the world. If they can seduce me from the paths of holiness, what shouts of joy there will be in the camp of the enemy! “Hold me up, and I shall be safe.”

3. Yes, let none that wait on You be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. When good men are in earnest on their own account, they soon begin to pray for others and the evil which they dread for themselves, they are sure to dread for their Brothers and Sisters. David first prayed, “Let me not be ashamed.” And then he added, “Let none that wait on You be ashamed.” The only shame that is worth having is a blessed shame—the shame of true repentance which sorrows over past sin, of which it is ashamed. Alas, there will be an eternal shame which shall cover those who choose the ways of sin!

4. Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. That is the prayer of one who is taught of the Spirit, for, by nature, our desire is to have our own way and if we can have our own way, we are satisfied. But when the Lord has taught us better, our prayer is, “Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths.”

5. Lead me in Your truth, and teach me: for You are the God of my salvation; on You do I wait all the day. We need not only to have the path shown to us, but to be led into it, for we are like babes just learning to walk—we must have a finger that we may hold, or a hand that we may lean upon. “Lead me in Your truth, and teach me.” That is the second time that David has prayed for the Lord to teach Him—and as long as we are here, we also shall need to pray, Teach me. What is a disciple but a learner? His daily cry must be, “Teach me: for You are the God of my salvation.” There is another grip of the hand of faith. I have taken You to be my salvation, O my God! I trust nowhere else, “On You do I wait all the day,” expecting everything from You—tarrying Your leisure, but tarrying hopefully, expecting to be blessed.

6. Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Your saints knew them before I was born, and I have known them since I have been born again. By the constancy of Your kindness to me to now, continue to bless me, for are You not an unchanging God?

7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Your mercy remember me for Your goodness’ sake, O LORD. In this verse and the preceding one, there are three, “remembers”—first, that God would remember His tender mercies and His loving kindnesses. Next, that He would not remember our sins and our transgressions and, then, that He would remember us according to His mercy and goodness. This last request may remind us of the prayer of the dying thief, “Lord, remember me.” And it may serve for us as a repenting prayer. “According to Your mercy remember me for Your goodness’ sake, O Lord.”

8. Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. If good men endeavor to make others good, much more will the good God do so. A good man will seek to lead sinners in the right way and much more will our good Savior, and God, and Helper do so. Only let us be willing to be taught and come to Him confessing our ignorance, and asking to be led and instructed. This Psalm, you see, dear Friends, is all about teaching—and as David needed instruction, so do we! The next verse deals with the same subject.

9. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way. Not the proud man, but the meek—the learners—the teachable ones! Those who, like little children, are willing to believe what they are told upon true authority. Oh, that we all may be among the meek! The tender-mouthed horse is easy to drive, but some people are so stubborn and obstinate that they are “as the horse, or as the mule which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” Oh, that we were sensitive to the slightest touch of the Divine hand and always ready and anxious to be instructed by the Lord!

10. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant and His Testimonies. Do you believe that, you who have been sorely tried? If you are resting in Covenant love, and find your hope in Covenant blood and Covenant promises, you must believe that everything God does to you is done in mercy and truth. Yes, though He strikes till every blow of the rod leaves a blue wound, yet we rejoice in these tokens of His fatherly love and desire for our highest good, for He has said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” The word, “love,” in that passage conveys the idea of a very tender and ardent affection.

11. For Your name’s sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity; for it is great. Those who are not taught of God pray very differently from that, for their prayer is, “O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is little.” But he who is graciously instructed confesses the greatness of his guilt and out of that he draws a plea for mercy, for is not God a great God, and is it not greatly to His Glory to pardon great sinners? And when they are pardoned, are they not filled with a great love and a great zeal, so that they are greatly serviceable to their Lord and Master?

12. What man is he that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose. True reverence for God, a holy fear of Him, is a quality that God delights to see. And wherever He finds it, there He gives further instruction.

13, 14. His soul shall dwell at ease and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant. Are you one of those trembling ones who fear to offend God? Well, I daresay that you sometimes envy those who are very boisterous in their joy. Do not envy them—you have something better in having that holy, filial fear that trembles at God’s Word—and you shall have the secret of the Lord with you and He will show you His Covenant.

15. My eyes are eyes toward the LORD; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. When they get into it, He will pluck them out of it. When Satan seems to cast a net over me, God will come and pull me out. There is force in that word, “pluck”—denoting swiftness and energy. And, perhaps, there is a little idea of roughness, but God’s roughness is true tenderness.

16 *.*Turn You unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. If you pass that dish round, there are some who will not help themselves from it, for they are not “desolate and afflicted.” But I know that there are some, even here, who are both “desolate and afflicted.” Be sure, dear Friends, that you make this prayer your own—“Turn You unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.”

17, 18. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring You me out of any distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain. And what follows? “Take the affliction and the pain away”? No!

18. And forgive all my sins. David will be quite content if God will but look with pitying eyes upon his sufferings, but, as for his sins, he must be clean rid of them—he cannot be happy until he has the answer to this petition—“Forgive all my sins.”

19. Consider my enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. The better the man, the more bitterly is he hated by the ungodly. It is not by holiness that you will escape the hatred of the world— it is by that very thing that you will awaken its malice! Do not wish to have it otherwise, but remember your Lord’s own words, “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” But, “Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in Heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the Prophets.” If we live near to God and are truly the seed of the woman, the seed of the serpent will constantly be nibbling at our heels—some little viper or other will be sure to be there! As the great serpent seeks to do us injury, so will his seed.

20. O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in You. Do you notice how David gets back to his keynote? Almost at the beginning of the Psalm, he said, “O my God, I trust in You.” Now he says “I put my trust in You.” Let faith in God be the keynote of your life Psalm! At another time, David wrote, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” That is the motto for all Christians—“Trust, trust, TRUST!” When there is nothing to be seen, when you are in thick Egyptian darkness, let Job’s confident declaration be the resolve of your spirit, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on You. The child of God cannot hope to pass through the world safely unless he is careful to keep his integrity and his uprightness. There are some who profess to be Christians who try to get on in trade by various tricks—and they hope to win the favor of men by just bending a little to their ways. Never do so, Beloved! If you give way an inch, you will have to give way a yard or a mile before long!

22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. God did so Himself to Israel. Jacob, whose name was also, Israel, said, “All these things are against me.” Yet God redeemed him out of his troubles! And so will the Lord do for all His people in due time, glory be unto His name, world without end! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE TENDER PITY OF THE LORD  
NO. 941

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 17, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.” Psalm 103:13, 14.**

DAVID sang of the compassionate pity of our heavenly Father who will not always chide, nor keep His anger forever. He had proved in relation to Himself that the Lord is not easily provoked but is plenteous in mercy. Remembering how feeble and how frail we are, the Lord bears and forbears with His weak and sinful children and is gentle towards them as a nurse with her child. Although our own observation has proved this to be true, and our experience everyday goes to show how truthfully David sang, yet assuredly the clearest display of the patience and pity of God towards us may be seen in the life of Him in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Therefore, instead of speaking upon Providential patience, I shall bid you gaze upon God in Christ Jesus, and see there how human weaknesses and follies are pitied of the Lord. With a text from the Old Testament, I purpose to take you straight away to the New, and the tenderness and pity of the Father shall be illustrated by the meekness and lowliness of the Son towards His immediate disciples, the Apostles. While the Holy Spirit shows you thus the pity of Jesus Christ towards His own personal attendants, you will see as in a glass His pity towards you.

I. At the outset let us attentively and admiringly observe THE DIVINE PATIENCE OF OUR LORD JESUS TOWARDS THE APOSTLES. I shall begin on this point by reminding you of their origin. Who, and what were these whom He received into intimate fellowship with Himself? They were not the high-born and powerful of the earth, for, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are chosen.” Not a single nobleman was numbered with the Apostles. They were not even educated persons who, if poor, might still wear a gentle heart beneath a peasant’s garb.

There was not a rabbi nor a philosopher among them. They were as uninstructed and as clownish as the rest of the peasantry of Palestine. He selected them from the populace. They were either fishermen or publicans—and these He made to be the first instruments of spreading abroad the Gospel and establishing His kingdom. For our Lord Christ, who had been accustomed to the thrones, and royalties of Heaven, to stoop to be the familiar companion of any of the sons of men would be wonderful condescension! But what shall I say when He elects the weak, and the poor, and the despised, to be His friends? He might have selected for His associates the choicest spirits, the advanced intellects, the educated minds, but, lo, He makes foolish the wisdom of this world, and chooses

the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are.

I do not exaggerate when I speak of the clownishness of the Apostles— their dullness and their ignorance. They were very honest and sincere, but they were far from being naturally quick of understanding. It was intentionally that our Lord made choice of them, on purpose, to illustrate the sovereignty of election, and that no flesh should glory in His Presence. He resolved that when He had filled them with the Divine Spirit, and ordained them to be the chosen vessels to bear His name unto the Gentiles, none should ascribe their power to themselves—but all the glory should evidently belong unto the Lord alone.

At the same time we must not forget that it must have caused the Lord Jesus much inconvenience and trouble to bear with such disciples. The refined spirit cannot be in continual contact with the coarse without enduring pain. Some may call such pain sentimental, but in so doing they only reveal their own ignorance, for, probably, no shocks are more severe, no wounds more smarting than those inflicted upon the delicate, the pure, the holy, the refined, by association with the groveling, the selfish, the sinful, the unspiritual. The glory of our Master’s patience is this—that He did not betray even the slightest disgust or weariness of His poor friends.

Though He might have said to them, as well as to the multitude, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?” yet He bore with them without repining, and only now and then gave them a rebuke. He never looked contemptuously upon them as His inferiors, though they were vastly so in all respects. He called them friends. He told them mysteries as if they could understand them, though often when He explained them to them they missed the inner meaning. He took them into His most retired haunts. He familiarized them with the garden and the Mount of Olives, where He was likely to seek His retirement.

He would even stay His prayers to teach them how to pray—there was nothing that He would not do for them. Just such as they were He accepted them, and resolved to train them for His service. Having once loved them, He loved them unto the end. He never made them feel a dread of His superiority, or shudder at the distance between their character and His own. He kept no register of their faults—He never rehearsed the list of their shortcomings—but, on the contrary, His main rebuke was His own perfect example. And He always treated them as His friends and Brethren. Think of this, and you will see in Christ Jesus that, “like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

Much forbearance He had with their lack of understanding. The Apostles, before Pentecost, were very gross and unspiritual in judgment. He Himself had to say to them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken.” Until the Holy Spirit came upon them, and made them quick of understanding, they were sorry dunces, dull scholars—even though the best of masters had become their Teacher. They did not understand the object of His mission. They fancied that He came to be a king, and they expected to receive crowns and dignities, and even began to quarrel over the division of the spoil—disputing as to which of them should be the greatest peer in the kingdom which they expected Him to establish.

He was thinking of suffering and death while they were dreaming of robes and coronets. The mother of Zebedee’s children even asked for her sons that one might sit on His right hand and the other on His left in His kingdom—a gross misconception, indeed, of what that kingdom would be—and a piece of pride and selfishness that she should seek for her sons, probably with their acquiescence—a place above their fellow disciples. When He spoke to them concerning His sufferings, though He used great plainness of speech, yet they could not understand Him. Take this passage in the ninth of Luke, at the forty-third verse—“While they wondered, everyone, at all things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask Him of that saying.”

The thought that the Son of God, the King of Israel should, by-and-by, be proclaimed king upon a felon’s Cross could not by any means find place in their minds. They continued to cling tenaciously to the idea of earthly dominion. What strange ignorance was that which led them to think the Savior referred to their having no bread when He said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” Think, too, of the dullness of Philip when the Lord was speaking concerning the Father, and he said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.”

And Thomas was not much wiser when he said, “Lord, we know not where You go, and how can we know the way?” There were many truths which Christ did not clearly teach to them before the descent of the Spirit, for the reason which He once gave—“I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.” Even when He made that simple statement, “A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father,” they did not understand Him. And He said to them, “Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me?”

The expression was so simple that they should have understood it, but their prejudices blinded their eyes. Nor was this confined to the early days of their fellowship with Him, for even after our Lord had risen from the tomb, those with whom He conversed on the road to Emmaus, who were probably by no means inferior to the rest, did not understand the references of the Prophets to Christ, and were not prepared to see in His Resurrection the manifest fulfillment of the words which had been spoken of old. Their eyes were held in more senses than one. Many a master would have grown weary of such pupils, but infinite love brought to its succor infinite patience, and He continued still to teach them though they were so slow to learn. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”  
Reflect again, my Brethren, upon the unevangelical spirit which these

Apostles often showed. On one occasion even John, as mild and gentle a spirit as any of them, asked to be permitted to call fire from Heaven to destroy certain Samaritans who would not receive the Savior because His face was set towards Jerusalem. Jesus, the friend of sinners, calling fire from Heaven? This might suit Elijah, but was not after the manner of the meek and lowly Prince of Peace. It would have been quite foreign to all His purposes, and contrary to His entire spirit. Yet the two sons of thunder would hurl lightning on their Master’s foes!

He might well have spoken to them as bitterly as David did to the sons of Zeruiah, when in their hot rage they would have slain their leader’s foolish foes. He might have said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zebedee?” But He merely said, “You know not what spirit you are of.” Read the ninth chapter of Luke, which is full of the failings of the disciples, and notice how John and the rest forbade the man who was casting out devils in Jesus’ name. With the true spirit of bigoted monopoly that will not tolerate anything outside the pale of orthodoxy, they said, “We saw one casting out devils in Your name.”

And instead of rejoicing that there were some beyond our company who were assisted by the Master’s power, and were glorifying the Master’s name, “we forbade him because he follows not with us.” Their Lord, instead of angrily upbraiding their intolerance, gently chided them with the sentence, “Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us.” Remember, also, how the disciples put away the mothers of Israel when they brought their tender offspring to receive the Savior’s blessing? This showed a very unevangelical spirit. They would not have their Lord interrupted by the cries of babes, and thought the children too insignificant to be worthy of His consideration.

But, though our Lord was much displeased with the disciples, yet He only said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not. For of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” But, my Brethren, it must have required great patience for our dear Lord and Master, who Himself would not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, to bear with these rough men who pushed the little ones on one side, who would gag the mouths of those who were doing good in their own way, and who would even call fire from Heaven upon poor ignorant sinners! Admire much His patience with their impatience, and see how, “Like as a father pities his children, so He pitied them,” because He knew they feared Him in their hearts, and their faults were rather infirmities than rebellions.

Again, their weakness of faith must have been, in itself, a great provocation to Him, and yet He bore with it most meekly. When in the storm, on the lake, they ought not to have been afraid, because Jesus was with them, though asleep. But their alarm was so great that they must awaken Him, not thinking of His weariness which required rest in sleep. And they were so ungenerously unbelieving as to insinuate that He was unkindly thoughtless of their danger—“Master,” said they, “do You not care that we perish?” Oh, what unbelief was here! He might well have been angry, but He rather rebuked the wind than they, and sweetly said, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?”

Not many days after, however, they found themselves in a like case, and after such a deliverance, they ought to have been confident, but again they were troubled. Let us not upbraid them, for it has been our case full often. Jesus came to them in the midst of the storm, walking on the sea, and they were afraid of Him, and thought it was a spirit, and they cried out. Their faith was so feeble—it was scarcely faith, but rather unbelief. Peter was a fair representative of them all when on that occasion he said, “If it is You, bid me come to You on the water.”

He had faith enough with venturous footstep to tread the wave, and to continue to do so until a more than usually boisterous gust made his heart tremble, and down he went. Jesus, as He caught him, tenderly said, “O you of little faith, why do you doubt?” No anger was in that fatherly rebuke. He spoke as a mother might, when, after teaching her child to walk, she saw its little feet give way and saved it from a fall.

Take another instance of their unbelief. Our Lord had fed the multitude, if you remember, with five loaves and two fishes, and but a short time after, another vast crowd was in a similar hungry condition. Jesus declared His compassion to the Apostles in much the same language as He had used previously—one would have thought that after seeing Him feed the five thousand so short a time before, they would have had no fear about the four thousand then to be fed, but would have said, “Lord, do as You did before. Here are our seven loaves and our few little fishes. If five loaves fed five thousand, surely you can feed four thousand with seven.”

Instead of that they said, “Why should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude?” Alas, for such unbelief! How could they doubt when with all their eyes they had seen what the Master could do? How could they be so unbelieving as to ask, “How can a man satisfy these men with bread here in this wilderness?” Surely the Savior must have been sorely put to it to bear with this. Moreover, they lost, by their unbelief, a large amount of power which they might have exercised for good—and they exposed their Master’s name to derision. When He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, He found a company gathered at the foot of the mountain who were glorying over the baffled disciples, because they could not cast out a devil from a poor tormented child.

There were the reviling multitude, and there the disconcerted disciples. The Lord Jesus immediately rectified the mischief by casting out the devil, and when alone with the disciples He answered their question, “Why could not we cast him out?” How pityingly and encouragingly He replied, “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove therefore to yonder place. And it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Now, where unbelief not only makes the person fearful, but causes him to be weak where he should be strong—and to expose his Master’s name and fame to doubt and distrust—it is enough to provoke anger in the holiest.

And yet the Master was not provoked, for He pitied His disciples as a father pities his children. Again, I would remark that it was not only in the earlier period of His communion that they were unbelieving. There might have been some excuse at that time, but even at the close of His sojourn with them they still remained doubters. Take Thomas as a case in point and hear him obstinately declare, “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe.” Yet our gentle Lord condescended to grant His incredulous disciple the tokens for which he had asked.

The rest of the Apostles do not seem to have been much stronger in faith, for when He appeared, “they were terrified and affrighted,” and were not comforted even when He said, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.” How gracious it was on His part, since they yet believed not, to eat before them all a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb, to prove that He was yet alive and in a real body!

What? Had they seen Him three years? Had they beheld the miracles which He worked? Had they listened to His teaching and perceived the Divinity which dwelt within Him—and yet when He had risen from the dead, did they refuse to believe the testimony of the holy women and of Peter and John? Did they disbelieve the evidence of the empty tomb? Oh, yes! For unbelief, “as in them all, and they might each have cried, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.” Yet He put up with them and pitied them still.

Nor have I exhausted this matter. Their emulations of each other must very frequently have distressed the lowly mind of Jesus. Again and again we find them striving among themselves which should be the greatest. After James and John had so foolishly sought to sit on His right hand and on His left, the ten, it is said, had indignation against them, proving that if they did not show it in the same manner, yet they were actuated by much the same spirit as the sons of Zebedee. We find them again contending which should be the greatest when our Lord took a little child and set him in their midst, and said, “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

As much as to say, “You need not choose places in the kingdom, and dispute as to precedence, you cannot even enter there while you are moved by the spirit of ambition. You must be humble, and become like this child before you can understand that kingdom.” Perhaps the worst case of the Apostles’ emulation is that recorded in Luke 22:24, when even after the blessed festival of love the apple of discord was thrown upon the table. Sad to think that at the Lord’s Supper Satan should be so present. Extraordinary as it may seem, yet so it was. The question, “Lord, is it I?” was succeeded by the question which of them should be the greatest.

Their Lord was about to die. Gethsemane’s sweat of agony was almost gathering on His brow. His passion was close at hand, and yet His disciples were taken up with so contemptible a question as which of them should take precedence of the other. That dear rebuke of washing their feet was a sweet way of reproving them and revealing His own love.

I must not forget that on some occasions they showed their pride in a very wrong and even insulting manner. Peter, who was, after all, but a type of the rest, when our Lord had spoken of His death, took Him and began to rebuke Him! Yes, he rebuked his Master!!! His Lord then turned Himself and rebuked the devil rather than Peter, though Peter had become the foolish instrument of the devil, and He said, “Get you behind Me, Satan: you are an offense unto Me: for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men.” Nor was this the only occasion, for when He had warned Peter that he would deny Him that night, He was contradicted point blank by His rash follower, and his fellow disciples joined Peter in the contradiction.

“Likewise also said all the disciples.” They were told to pray that they might not enter into temptation, but they were proud enough to believe that their Master did not know them and to think that no temptation could overcome them. Here was pride, indeed, and yet though those poor things who had needed to be humbled in the dust, spoke so exceeding proudly and lifted up their horn on high, yet all Jesus did was just pity them and to pray for them, and bear with their ignorance and their ill manners. Having loved them He pitied them, and remembered that they were but dust.

I will only mention one other matter, and that was His patience with their infirmities. I mean not only their sinless weaknesses, but those in which sin was in some degree present. Remember their weakness in the garden? He was in agony, and He selected three of them to watch near the scene of His passion. But when, in the midst of His distress, He came to them, as if He would have a word of comfort from them, He found them sleeping. Oh, the pathos of those words, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” And such an hour—an hour of such extremity! Where was their love that they could sleep while He was in agony?

Yet how mild His language—“The spirit, truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Worse than that, no sooner was He taken, than not one of all the band, so valiant in their own opinion, was found standing at his Master’s side! Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled. And the bravest of them all, in the hall where his Master was accused as a criminal, stood by the fire and warmed his hands, and said, “I know not the Man.” And then with oaths and cursing, even a third time declared, “I know not what you say.” Here was cowardly weakness, indeed, at which the Savior’s resentment might well have been kindled. But He showed no anger, He only turned and looked at Peter.

And it was such a look of mingled sorrow and pity that the poor denier of his Lord went out and wept bitterly. When the Lord had risen from the dead, He did not upbraid Peter, but He sent a special love message to him, “Go, tell My disciples and Peter.” And when Peter was with Him by the sea, the only rebuke, if rebuke it could be called, was the question, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” Asked a third time in remembrance of the three times in which he had denied Him, and that three times he might have the privilege of saying, “Yes, Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.”

Beloved Friends, it is meet that I should add that the pain to our Lord arising from these faults must be estimated by His matchless Character and by the end He had in view. Remember He was perfectly holy as Man, and, moreover, He was God. And to have to bear with such poor creatures as these was therefore the most wonderful condescension and pity. Engaged as He was in seeking their good, and not His own, it was the harder to endure that they should be such stubborn materials, and so great a hindrance to Him. Moreover, remember that He did not merely bear with them but treated them as His friends.

All things that He had heard of His Father He made known unto them. He admitted them into His most intimate acquaintanceship, and all the while almost His only rebuke to them was His own perfect example. He taught them humility by His humility. He taught them gentleness by His gentleness. He did not point out their defects in words. He did not dwell upon their errors—He rather let them see their own spots by His purity, their own defects by His perfection. Oh, the marvelous tenderness of Christ, who so paternally pitied them that feared Him!

II. Let us think for a short time of THE REASONS OF THIS DIVINE PATIENCE in the case of our Lord. Doubtless we must find the first reason in what He is. Our Lord was so greatly good that He could bear with poor frail humanity. When you and I cannot bear with other people it is because we are so weak ourselves. If you cannot bear with your imperfect brother, take it for certain that you are very imperfect yourself. Jesus was so free from selfishness that anything that they might do which was injurious to the honor due to Him did not afflict Him in the same way as our pride would afflict us.

All the suffering He would feel would be grief that they should be so erring, that they should have learned so slowly. He would not think of Himself, but would only think of them. Besides, He was so gentle, so tender! It was no exaggeration or egotism when He said, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” I would to God we could copy His love and borrow His “meekness so Divine.” He bore with them and pitied them because of His relationship to them. He had loved them as He has loved many of us, “from before the foundation of the world.” He was their Shepherd, and He pitied the diseases of His flock.

He was their Savior, and He lamented the sins from which He was about to save them. He was their “Brother born for adversity,” and He stooped to be familiar with their frailties. He had determined to bring many sons unto glory, and therefore, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured all things for the elects’ sake.

Another reason for His patience was His intention to become perfect as the Captain of our salvation, through suffering. You have perhaps enquired, “Why did not the Lord Jesus at once perfectly sanctify these Apostles, and deliver them from sin? He might have done so.” I grant you He might and I have often wondered why He does not do the same with us. But I do not wonder when I remember that it was necessary that He should become a faithful High Priest, touched with a feeling of our infirmities by being tempted in all points, like as we are.

Now, you and I have to bear with our imperfect brethren and if our Lord had never endured the same, He could not in that point have shown fellowship with us. In order that He might be a complete High Priest, and know all the temptations of all His servants, He bears with the infirmities and sins of disciples whom He could have perfected at once if He had willed, but whom He did not choose to perfect because He desired to reveal His tender pity towards them, and to obtain by experience complete likeness to His Brethren. Thus the High Priest of our profession became capable of sympathy with us in like condition, by having to bear with all the infirmities of His disciples.

Did He not also do this, my dear Friends, that He might honor the Holy Spirit? If Jesus had perfected the Apostles, they would not have seen so manifestly the Glory of the Holy Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit was come, what poor creatures the eleven were! But when the Holy Spirit was given, what brave men, what heroes, how deeply instructed, how powerful in speech, how eminent in every virtue they became! It is the object of Jesus Christ to glorify the Spirit, even as it is the design of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ in our hearts.

Moreover, our Lord was considering the future of the Apostles, and therefore bore with them instead of removing all their evil. He knew that after His decease they would think of these things. And I can well conceive that in their solitude, and when they met each other, they would either soliloquize or say to each other, “Do you not remember how our Lord spoke to us on such an occasion? I do remember the very words He used.” “Yes,” says the other, blushing and with tears, “I do remember we did not understand Him.” “And do you remember the question Philip put to Him?” “Yes,” says the other, “but do you know I did not confess it, but I was just going to say the very same thing, for I was quite as foolish as Philip.”

And then they would smile to themselves, and say, “How slow of understanding we were in those days!” “Yes,” but the other would say, “Did you not notice that our blessed and ever dear Master never smiled contemptuously upon us, and never seemed wearied by our folly? He evidently looked at us as being little children, and He just explained Himself again and again. And when we did not comprehend He was still ready to explain once more. Oh, how tenderly He dealt with us!” And then one of them would say, “How often have I lamented that I fled that night when He was seized. I wish I had gone with Him right up to the judgment seat. I wish I had stood at the foot of the Cross or hung on another cross side by side with Him.

“But do you know when I met Him after His Resurrection, I thought He would have said a word, but there was never even a hint about my cowardice. He received me with just the same tranquil love He had been likely to show before, and He sent me on an errand just as He had been likely to do, to show He could trust me still.” Oh, what a dear and tender Lord He was! They did not know when He was alive how good He was, but when He was gone, and had given them the Spirit, they could see it all.

Just as with a photograph, when it is first taken the image is not yet visible to the eye, it has to be a little while in the bath, and to be washed before the artist brings it out. And so the picture of Christ on their

hearts had to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and then it was revealed to them. And as they looked on it, they said, “Never was there such a One. He was, and is, the Chief among ten thousand, and our souls shall love Him even unto death.” If it is so on earth it will be much more so in Heaven—when we enter within the pearly gate we shall see how Jesus loved us when we were on earth.

“I remember well,” says one, “that trial which passed over me, and I said God has forgotten me, He will be mindful of me no more—and all the while He was afflicting me in very faithfulness, and in love to my soul.” Then will another saint bear testimony, “Though I was very often cold of heart and forgot Him, yet He said unto me, ‘Return unto Me, I am married unto you, says the Lord.’ And when I did return I do remember how gently He received me and let out the full flood of His love into my soul once again! So that He restored unto me the love of my espousals, and I rejoiced in His salvation.”

You see, the Lord is thinking of our eternity. He does not sanctify us at once, for we should not know all the sin that is in us, and therefore should not know how much we owe to Him. No, He leaves us these thirty, forty, fifty years in the wilderness that we may see what is in our hearts and what is in His heart as He manifests it towards us in unfailing loving kindness. Blessed be His name, that thus He pities us even as a father does his children.

III. I shall now close, by indicating THE TEACHING TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS PATIENCE. Is it not this?—First, if the Lord has thus had pity upon you as He had on His Apostles, do you even so to others. I know there is a tendency with us to feel so grieved with the inconsistencies of our fellow Christians as to lose patience. Moses, the most meek of men, yet lost his temper with Israel, and said, “Hear now, you rebels, must I fetch you water out of this rock?” I do not wonder that he called them rebels, for they were such.

But God would not have Moses call them so, for they were God’s children. Their Father may call them what names He pleases, but He will not have the servants take liberties with the children. Sometimes when we see the inconsistencies of God’s people, we are apt to speak harshly, but our Lord sets us a different example. Jesus bore with imperfect people, ought not you and I to do the same? Jesus must have borne a great deal more than we ever have borne or ever shall have to bear, yet He was still pitiful, still kind and loving to them—let us follow in His steps.

It ought to help us when we remember that we were converted through imperfect preachers. I am sure if any of you have been converted through my ministry, you have been converted through a very imperfect one. While I deeply regret my imperfections, yet in one since I glory in my infirmities, because the power of God does rest upon me. For what are we? We cannot turn any to righteousness—the Lord, alone, can do that! But, if by imperfect instruments you are blessed to the saving of your souls, you ought never again to be out of patience with imperfect people.

Remember, also, that you are imperfect yourself. You can see great faults in others, but, my dear Brother, be sure to look in the looking glass every morning and you will see quite as many faults, or else your eyes are weak. If that looking glass were to show you your own heart you would never dare look again—I fear you would even break the glass. Old John Berridge, as odd as he was good, had a number of pictures of different ministers round his room, and he had a looking glass in a frame to match. He would often take his friend into the room and say, “That is Calvin, that is John Bunyan,” and when he took him up to the looking glass he would add, “and that is the devil.” “Why,” the friend would say, “it is myself.” “Ah,” said he, “there is a devil in us all.” Being so imperfect we ought not to condemn.

Remember, also, that if we are not patient and forbearing there is clear proof that we are more imperfect than we thought we were. Those who grow in Divine Grace grow in forbearance. He is but a mere babe in Grace who is evermore saying, “I cannot put up with such conduct from my brother.” My dear Brother, you are bound even to wash the disciples’ feet! If you know yourself, and were like your Master, you would have the charity which hopes all things and endures all things.

Remember that your Brothers and Sisters in Christ, with whom you find so much fault, are God’s elect for all that, and if He chose them, why do you reject them? They are bought with Christ’s blood, and if He thought them worth so much, why do you think so little of them? Remember, too, that with all their badness there are some good points in them in which they excel you. They do not know so much, but perhaps they act better. It may be that they are more faulty in pride, but perhaps they excel you in generosity. Or if perhaps one man is a little quick in temper, yet he is more zealous than you. Look at the bright side of your Brother, and the black side of yourself, instead of reversing the order as many do. Remember there are points about every Christian from which you may learn a lesson. Look to their excellences, and imitate them. Think, too, that small as the faith of some of your Brethren is, it will grow, and you do not know what it will grow to. Though they are now so sadly imperfect, yet if they are the Lord’s people, think of what they will be one day!

O Brothers and Sisters, shall we know them? Shall we know ourselves when we once get to Heaven, and are made like our Lord? There, my Brother, though you are a quarrelsome man, I will not quarrel with you. I am going to live in Heaven with you, and I will keep out of your way till then. I will not find fault with you, my Friend, if I can help it, because you will be one day without fault before the Throne of God. If God will so soon remove your faults, why should I take note of them? I will not peevishly complain of the rough stone, for I see it is under the Great Artist’s chisel, and I will tarry till I see the beauty which He brings out of it.

The drift of this lesson, is this—as your heavenly Father has pity on you, have pity on one another. He remembers that we are dust— remember this of others. You who live in the same house, do not fall out with each other. You, who are members of the same Church, do not criticize and judge each other so severely. Or if you are severe upon the fault,

be gentle towards the person who commits it, and seek not his destruction, but his good. Preacher, mind you learn your own lesson—be as tender towards those who sin as the Master was.

Another lesson, and I have done. In your own case, my dear Friends, have firm faith in the gentleness and forbearance of Christ. You are conscious, this morning, that you have been slipping, and have fallen short or gone beyond the mark. And I know unbelief will now whisper to you that you cannot expect to enjoy renewed fellowship with Christ, or to taste His love again. O think not so! Think of how gentle He was with the Apostles, and remember He is the same still. Change of place has not changed His Character. The exaltations of Heaven have not removed from Him the tenderness of His heart. He will accept you still.

My Brother, I know that prayer of yours was not what it should be—try again. He will accept the prayer, despite the fault. I know, my dear Friend, your ministry up till now has not been so earnest as it should have been— but do not give it up. Preach again, preach with greater fervor and greater unction—He will bless you, He has not put you away. I know that with all of us there is nothing we have done but what we might weep a whole shower of tears over. But Jesus, the Pitiful, knows our meaning. He will not look at the flaws, but at the jewel. He will cover our sins with the mantle of His love, He will accept the will for the deed.

Let us try again. Let us trust in Him wholly, and devote ourselves unreservedly to His service. Let us be persuaded that as we accept from our children a poor fading nosegay on our birthday, and thank them as much as if it were pearls and diamonds, because it shows their love, even so if our heart loves Jesus, He will receive our poor imperfect service for our love’s sake. “He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.” He knows we cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean. He, in His infinite compassion will cover our transgressions and accept our heart’s love. Be of good courage, then. Be of good courage, my Brethren, He will accept you still.

I should think this subject ought to attract many sinners to Him, and I pray it may, “for him that comes to Him He will in no wise cast out.” O that the Holy Spirit would lead many of you to fix your hope on Jesus, the gentle Lamb of God. Come and trust Him, O Sinner. The Lord bless you. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1492 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FIRST NOTE OF MY SONG  
NO. 1492

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 31, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Who forgives all your iniquities.”  
Psalm 103:3.**

I am a firm believer, not only in the Inspiration of the Psalms, themselves, but also in the correctness of their order. I believe that Paul was right when he called a certain Psalm, “the Second Psalm,” and that those are wrong who so disarrange the book as to make it the sixteenth. Anything to certain radicals in theology is better than the established order— they change for change sake! Many attempts have been made to arrange the Psalms chronologically and critics have shifted them about at their pleasure, according to this theory or that. Their wisdom is utter folly! The Psalms as they stand have an order most appropriate and instructive.

If time permitted I could illustrate this in many ways, but for this present it is more in the line of my discourse to observe that we could not have understood so well the 103rd Psalm if we had not first read the thirty-second. You remember how the 32nd begins? “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.” The pardoned man is blessed and then he blesses God. First the full, deep, effective blessing comes to him freely from the Lord and then he reflects the blessing and exclaims in joyful gratitude, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

First, we are blessed with the pardon of sin and then we bless God for the pardon of sin. The Divine blessing enters our hearts loaded with good things. We gladly receive the heavenly messenger and then it begins to sing like a minstrel at a feast, nor does it long sing alone for all that is within the house of our manhood arouses itself to join in the strain and never is better music made this side the heavenly places than when all that is in us is stirred up to magnify and bless God’s holy name! Our text is one stanza of the never-ending “song of loves.”

In the verse before us the most wonderful point, to my mind, is the attribute of God which David selects for special praise—“All that is within me bless His holy name.” You might have expected to read, “gracious name,” or, “merciful name,” but you find it written “holy name.” Indeed, this is the emphatic point of the wonder of forgiven sin, that a holy God should pass it by! If God could wink at iniquity; if there were something in His Nature which rendered sin tolerable to Him, it would be a slight thing that He should allow it to go unpunished. But because He is a holy God— righteous, just and pure—who cannot look upon iniquity, whose fury burns against evil, therefore it becomes wonderful even to amazement that He should forgive our iniquities!

To accomplish this wonder, the miracle of the Cross was worked by unspeakable love. O man, you have but to gain a true idea of that holiness which is like a consuming fire, that holiness which even angels cannot

gaze upon, but of which they sing, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts”— you have but to gain a glimpse of that unutterable perfection and you will abhor yourself in dust and ashes—and then you will marvel to think that the Thrice Holy One should have spared your guilty soul! How abhorrent is your depravity in His sight and yet He does not smite you! What are you but a mass of pollution? And yet the Infinitely Pure has considered you in love! What are you but a sink of impurity? And yet the All-perfect One has looked upon you in compassion!

Do you believe in Him and accept His dear Son? Then Grace has looked upon you! Before the glance of Omnipotent Love, your sin shall disappear and your iniquity shall forever vanish! O blessed deed of boundless mercy! If, indeed, the royal pardon has been sent to us from the court of Heaven, we may right heartily say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name, who forgives all your iniquities.” In these latter days, among the other wonderful things which have been developed, we have been enriched by a school of thinkers who kick against the doctrine of Justification by Faith and rebel against the idea of the Atonement and the forgiveness of sin.

The meager gospel which they proclaim to us poor fallen wretches is this—If you do wrong, there is no help for it. You will have to reap the consequences. If you do right you will, of course, bring your hearts into a healthier condition and you will be happy in proportion. But if you do wrong there is no hope for you—there will certainly come upon you the result of evil and you will suffer till you work yourself right. “Do not flatter yourself,” they say, “with any idea of Grace and mercy interposing—there is either no God, or if there is one, He will take no notice of your prayers, but will let you develop in your own way. The fictions of substitution, imputation and pardon are mere delusions, or pious subterfuges unworthy of rational men.”

These “men of culture” and “modern thought” are intent upon robbing us of the essence of the Gospel! Under cover of enforcing a Truth of God which nobody denies, they undermine the special doctrine for which Revelation was given. It is true that upon man’s character his true condition depends, but this by no means disproves the interposition of supreme love. Woe to us if their philosophy should be true—and woe to them, also—yes, woe to the whole world if their denial of our best hope should be accepted for truth! As for us, this gracious forgiveness which they deny touches the chief spring of our soul and stirs us with a hope of better things! This very Grace which they deprecate as though it were immoral and could not work men towards holiness, is the cause in our soul of hatred of sin and the source of our hearts’ noblest aspirations after holiness!

Moved by gratitude, we long to honor our pardoning God, who, though He is glorious in holiness, is also glorious in Grace when He blots out sin! We would gladly prove, by our lives, that we have not received this gift of mercy in vain, by letting all men see that we are now dead to sin and cannot live any longer therein. Evangelism does not flatter mere morality by making it the rival of Christ, but it is the highest promoter of all that is honest, temperate and of good report, as our daily conversation shall prove. The grand Truth of God of forgiven sin is our subject at this time. I hope I cannot say anything which will be new to you upon this point, for if I could, it would look as if you did not already understand this early privilege of true Believers.

Many of you understand it and enjoy it and, therefore, I can only bring to your remembrance old facts. But these, like well-stored and ripe fruit, will be exceedingly sweet. I spread the table, not with foreign delicacies and novel dainties, but with the everyday fare of the great Father’s house. Our sermon will be simple, but I trust it will be most consoling. It will not display the ability of the speaker, but it will reveal the Grace of His Master and this is my heart’s desire. “I believe in the forgiveness of sins,” is one of the most blessed sentences of the creed. Dear Friends, we do most joyfully believe in it, and, what is more, we enjoy the truth personally as a matter of fact in our own case! May we feel the joy of it at this good hour. O Holy Spirit, bear witness with the water and the blood!

I. In speaking of the pardon of sin, I shall remark, first, that it is A PRIMARY BLESSING. Observe, it is put first in the catalog given by the Psalmist. It is not written, “Who heals all your diseases, who forgives all your iniquities.” No, but the list commences thus, “Who forgives all your iniquities.” Forgiveness leads the van and stands in the forefront of the host of mercies. When the angels of God meet us, the first messenger of love that comforts our heart brings in his hand pardon for our transgressions. As the olive leaf in the dove’s mouth proved to Noah that all the waters were receded, so does a sense of forgiven sin assure us that our great griefs are ended and our liberty and joy has come. Pardon shines first of the stars of mercy.

A main reason for this is the fact that we never enjoy a mercy as a mercy from God till we receive the forgiveness of sins. A man lives while his sin is unforgiven. He eats, he drinks, he sleeps, he wakes and talks about enjoying life—but none of these things are received by him as gifts from God. If he thinks upon God at all, the Divine name is a terror to him. He does not eat his bread as though it were given by a Father’s hand, nor does he put on his garments as though he were clothed by Divine love. That cannot be while he abides under Divine anger! The unpardoned sinner is barely able to see God as his Benefactor—as his Father he knows Him not. God does bestow mercies upon unpardoned men and women, but they cannot receive them as such until, first of all, they come to know that their transgression is forgiven.

Brethren, there are many mercies which are not given at all and cannot be given until first of all the pardon of sin has been bestowed. It would be out of place and inconsistent to give the blessings of the Covenant to unpardoned sinners. For instance, why should God heal the diseases of a man under condemnation for sin? It is but a scant mercy which would seek the health of a man condemned to die—by all means relieve his pain, but his disease you may leave alone! We cannot expect God to crown a man with loving kindness and tender mercies while he is still dead in sin and lives in daily dread of a second death—an eternal death.

A coronation for a condemned criminal would be a superfluity of inconsistency. To crown a hardened convict who lies in the cell of Newgate awaiting his execution would be a wretched mockery! How could it be

that God should wreathe a chaplet of favors for a man who has refused His mercy and willfully abides under His wrath on account of unconfessed and unpardoned sin? How could our spiritual youth be renewed like the eagle’s, or our mouth be satisfied with good things while as yet we are doomed to die and are withering away in our wickedness? What are good things to a tortured conscience and what is renewed youth to a soul racked by remorse? No, pardoned sin must clear the road for the march of Divine Grace—this jungle of iniquity must be removed to make a highway for our God.

The application of the blood of sprinkling must be felt! The cleansing power of the Atonement must be known or the rest of the blessings of the Covenant will never reach us. And well may the Lord place this mercy first because when it comes, it ensures all the rest! The forgiveness of sin is the dawn of the day which is always followed by the clearer light. God does not pardon us and then leave us to perish of our spiritual diseases— but when once He grants a plenary absolution, then His Spirit exercises His healing art and recovers us of the leprosy of sin. When the Lord forgives all our iniquities, it is not long before we perceive that our life is redeemed from destruction, crowned with loving kindness and satisfied with good things to the renewal of its youth!

Pardon never comes alone—troops of blessings attend it! The voice of the turtle dove, which speaks peace because of pardoned sin, also tells that the rain is over and gone and that the fruits of the Spirit will soon appear. He who gave His Son’s blood to wash us will withhold no good thing from us! He who has said to us, “Your sins are forgiven you,” has given us a grant of all necessary good in that one sentence of His love! Like the comet nucleus, which bears a streaming train of light behind it, so does forgiveness draw along with it a far-reaching glory of boundless favor. Well may this blessing be set first since it carries all the rest in its loins—

*“When dreadful guilt is done away  
No other fears we know.  
That hand which scatters pardons down, Shall crowns of life bestow.”*

There is this, also, to be thought of, that the pardon of sin comes first that it may be seen to be an act of pure Grace. If any other blessing had preceded it, our legal spirits would have dreamed of merit and fitness—if any attainment had been reached by us before the forgiveness of sins was given, we might have been tempted to glory in self—but now we perceive that God forgives our sins before He heals our moral diseases and, therefore, there is no room for pride to set her foot. While the man is still white with the leprosy of sin, the Lord visits him in pity to show that He looks for nothing in man as the motive power of His love. While yet the sinner has his judgment perverted, his affections polluted and his desires depraved—even while he is full of the plague of his own heart, God says to him—“I have forgiven you.”

This, therefore, is pure Grace and is set in the foreground that its sovereignty and freeness may be written before our eyes as with a sunbeam. God pardons men as sinners just as He finds them, notwithstanding that they have nothing to recommend them to Him. Their disease is so foul that they might have been spurned for their loathsomeness if it were not for His boundless love! But seeing them plunged in evil and dead in sin, He magnifies His mercy by quickening them to new life and forgiving them all their trespasses.

Brothers and Sisters, on this first head I want to be very practical and say to you—let us seek this forgiveness of sin as a primary blessing if we have not yet obtained it. If the Holy Spirit puts it first, let us seek it first. Be wise, O you who feel your guilt, and do not go about, first of all, to make a reformation in yourselves and then to come to God for mercy. But come to Him, first, and then see after other things. When you come to Him, do not ask Him to first heal your soul’s disease, but first to forgive your iniquities! Follow God’s order and you cannot go amiss! There is infinite wisdom in all the Lord’s arrangements. Do not, I pray you, try to make that first which God makes second, nor that second which God makes first!

You are guilty, ask for pardon at the outset. Through Jesus Christ a free pardon is proclaimed, pardon for sins of the deepest dye! Pardon bought and sealed with His atoning blood! Come and receive it just as you are. Though there is nothing in you to commend you to the Divine regard, you are now in just such a state as best prepares you for His Sovereign Grace. Are you startled at this statement? It is neither more nor less than the Truth of God! You are empty, therefore there is room in you for the fullness of Divine mercy! You are polluted, therefore there is opportunity to show the power of the blood in cleansing you! You are guilty and there is space for undeserved mercy. Plead your guiltiness and say, “Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” Do not urge any extenuation, but as you are guilty, say, “Forgive me.” In your confessed guiltiness there is space for the great King to do as He wills and put away your sin by a sovereign act of mercy.

Let your first desire be pardoned sin! Do not wait till first you understand all mysteries, but get your sins forgiven! Do not first labor to attain a perfect life—get your sins forgiven! Do not first make a profession, join a Church and put on outward religiousness. Get your sins forgiven! There David’s Psalm begins and there yours must began if God, in love, accepts it—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name; who forgives all your iniquities.” That is our first head. Pardon is the primary blessing—seek it as such.

II. Forgiveness is A PRESENT BLESSING. This is very apparent in the text, which is in the present tense—“Who forgives all your iniquities.” Not, “who will, perhaps, forgive you on your death bed.” Not, “Who did forgive you years ago and now condemns you.” No, it is, “Who forgives”—is now forgiving daily, hourly, momentarily—is continually forgiving your iniquity. I want to bring this fact of a present blessing before your minds briefly, but very clearly. This privilege the Believer has actually obtained—all his sins are forgiven at this moment of time. Blessed be the name of the Lord, we are even now washed from sin!

We shall grow in Grace, but we shall never be more completely pardoned than when we first believed! We shall one day stand before the glorious Presence of God in His own sacred courts and see the Well-Beloved

and wear His likeness, but we shall not even then be more perfectly forgiven than we are at this present moment! Sin depresses our spirit—the consciousness of it often makes us weep in secret and yet none of it is imputed to us—every grain of it is as far removed from us as the east is from the west. Rejoice, Believer, that the Spirit bears this witness—“God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.” As many as have looked to Christ upon the Cross are now justified by faith and have peace with God. They are at this moment cleansed from all sin through the application of the precious blood of Christ. This is a matter of present fact, and not of mere hope.

According to the text this present mercy is perpetually bestowed—He still forgives our iniquity—there is perpetuity in it. At this very moment I may be mourning my sin, but God is forgiving it. Alas, I may be sinning, for even in the holiest deeds we do there is still sin—but even then God is still forgiving! If, indeed, you are a Believer in Jesus Christ, the Lord is at all times forgiving you! As constant as your sin, so constant is His forgiveness! Never fall into the notion of some that the one forgiveness which we received at the first has rendered it unnecessary for us to seek new forgiveness, and unnecessary for us to offer new confession. It is not so! The Lord is always forgiving and it is for us to still be seeking that blessing!

We ask each day for daily bread though the promise has made it sure, and so must we daily seek mercy, though it is already promised. Our Lord said, “After this manner also pray you,” and a part of that prayer is, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.” I know that certain brethren say that the Lord’s prayer is not for Believers—but their dictum in such a case is not worth the breath they waste in delivering it! I am quite satisfied, for one, to pray as my Lord taught me. If they prefer to pray as their whims teach them, it is at their own risk! Besides, I read that we are to confess our sins, one to another—and sins to another are certainly sins towards God! If, then, we are to confess to our fellow men the wrongs which we have done to them, it will take a great deal of reasoning to convince me that we are not to confess the wrongs which we do towards our heavenly Father!

There should be daily confession, for even, “if we walk in the light as God is in the light”—and that is a very high condition—and if we have fellowship with God clearly and distinctly, yet even then we shall need to have the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us from all sin. We still sin even when walking in the light and still need that Jesus should cleanse us by His blood. Herein is our consolation, that Jesus is always cleansing us— “He forgives all your iniquities.” You are often sinning, but He is always forgiving you! You are often wandering, often erring, often grieving Him, but “He forgives all your iniquities.”

I do not feel like preaching when I touch this text! I heartily wish I could sit down and have a happy cry over this blessed Truth—that my God is, at this moment, forgiving me! Oh, poor Heart, you have much to chide yourself for, but your Lord forgives you! You are a frail, foolish, unstable, selfish, wayward thing, but He forgives you! Whatever your faults, known and unknown, He is forgiving you now! Even while you are lamenting your many transgressions, He is casting them behind His back and hurling them into the depths of the sea! While I speak to you with my voice, my own heart is singing inwardly, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, who forgives all your iniquities.”

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, this mercy of pardon is knowingly received. We know that we are forgiven. “Presumption,” says one! Simply the Truth of God, say I! Do you think David would say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, who may or may not have forgiven me.” Ah, no! He speaks of favors which he had consciously received! Nobody ever sings over uncertain blessings. I say again, nobody ever sings over an uncertain pardon! A doubt as to our forgiveness is fatal to all joy, for it lets in the dread fear of Divine wrath! Absolute certainty must be realized before a heart can make a song concerning the forgiveness of sin. When by faith we accept the Lord Jesus to be our All in All, we are as clear about God’s having forgiven us our sins as we are about our having committed them!

Upon our believing, we have as good evidence of being cleansed as we had of having been foul! Our sense of guilt arises from our knowledge of the Law and that is clear. But our sense of forgiveness comes from our knowledge of the Gospel—and that is equally clear. I am not sure that I was condemned if there is a question about the Law. But there is no question and, as a sinner, I am condemned. In the same way I am not assuredly absolved if there is a question about the Gospel—but as there is no question about the Gospel, I am assuredly absolved because I believe in Jesus. Resting in Christ and trusting alone in Him, you and I may have a present conscious sense of pardon—we may

 know our forgiveness and be beyond doubt concerning it. May God bring us to that happy condition!

Then, Brothers and Sisters, this present blessing is immediately efficient, for it secures us a present right to all that is involved in being pardoned. If a man is forgiven his offenses, he has peace towards God. He has boldness to enjoy access to God and reason to expect that his petitions will be answered. The stone which was lying at the door blocking his acceptance is now rolled way. He is a justified man and he is accepted in the Beloved. God treats him as just and rewards him as such. The man is free from guilt, for God has absolved him. He is worthy in the sight of the great Judge of all the earth. “Being justified by faith” we have—ah, my Brethren—we have not only what the Apostle tells us, but we have untold blessings! We have time and eternity, life and death, earth and Heaven, Christ and God! These are ours now! We have a present portion in all the Covenant promises and provisions.

The practical point is this—if this forgiveness of sin is a present blessing, seek for it today! Seek it at once! Do not be satisfied unless you are forgiven now! Do not be satisfied unless you are forgiven every day and all the day! Do not put off your soul with a bare hope, but labor for certainty! Do not foolishly postpone it in the mere chance that at the last pinch, when you come to die, you may be forgiven, but cry for it now! Why, man alive, if I knew I could gain pardon when I came to die I should not like to spend the interval without it. It is such a privilege to be forgiven that I want it at once and cannot endure delay. Oh, the sense of pardoned sin! What sweetness! What rest! I know its rapture in my own heart—it is my support and my delight—making my heart to be all music and dancing!

We, at this present hour, joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have received the Atonement. I charge you, do not postpone this matter—why should you put off joy? O repenting Sinner, believe that you can have forgiveness through Christ Jesus and you shall have it! Going to God through Jesus Christ with a humble confession of your sin, you shall TODAY enjoy the Father’s kiss of reconciliation and your conscience shall be thoroughly purged from the least taint of sin. May the Holy Spirit work this present sense of forgiveness in you all.

III. Thirdly, this is a PERSONAL BLESSING. I cannot resist the tendency, in reading, to lay the stress upon the word, “your.” “Who forgives all your iniquities.” Our Lord is a blessed God to forgive anybody, but that He should forgive me is the greatest feat of His mercy! A good Brother wrote me the other day, “Mercy had reached its zenith when it saved me.” He thought so of himself and we may each one think the same of his own case—

*“‘Tis Grace, ‘tis glorious Grace indeed,  
Grace without parallel!  
Great! But how great? Does far exceed  
The power of speech to tell.”*

You can all rejoice that God forgives iniquity, but your rejoicing will never reach so high as when you know that He forgives all your iniquity. Honey is not sweet except to him that tastes it. “But may we know this personally?” asks one. I answer, “Yes.” Some of us know that God has forgiven us, because we have the character which He describes as being forgiven.

He forgives those who confess their sin—“If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We have made confession before His face and we believe His Word and are, therefore, sure that He has cleansed us. He has promised mercy to those who forsake their sins. Having forsaken our sins, we look to be forgiven for Christ’s sake. Forgiveness is also freely promised to those who look to Jesus for it. We are looking to Him and we are forgiven. Are you not Believers? Then there is no hope for you—but if you are trusting alone in Jesus Christ, your iniquity is blotted out. He that believes is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. In repentance, in confession of sin, in forsaking sin and in faith in our Lord Jesus, we have the marks of pardoned sinners and these marks are apparent in our souls.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, if you have any doubt about whether the Lord forgives you, now, it will be well for you to make sure that you accept His way of salvation. It is by faith in His dear Son. Do you need any other way? He forgives because Jesus stood in the sinner’s place and He puts the sinner into Christ’s place. Are you satisfied with that great plan of salvation by Substitution, by Atonement, by Sacrifice? “Oh,” I hear you say, “Satisfied with it! I am delighted with it! It is all my salvation and all my desire.” Then, if you have accepted what God sets before you, it is not possible that He should refuse you the blessing which He has promised. What says the Scripture? “Through His name whoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

As sure as you have received Christ, your sin is removed from you! It cannot be that a man has Christ and has his sin, too, for his iniquity must be covered to whom Christ is All in All. Yes, we have this pardon personally and pleasantly, for we believe in Jesus. Do you not believe in the Divine Word and testimony concerning the pardon of sin? Have you not heard the Lord God declare that His Son has forever put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself? What better evidence do you need than the Infallible Word? Do you look for feelings, signs, tokens, or other things to corroborate the witness of your God? Is He an unreliable witness? Is not His Word enough—alone, and by itself? It is so to those that have believed and it ought to be so to all men! For my own part, I had rather venture my soul upon one Word of God in the sacred Scriptures than upon all the whispers of angels that men have ever heard, all the visions that men have ever seen and all the ecstasies of delight that saints have ever felt! All the world, all the Church and all Heaven put together cannot make up the weight of one sentence of God’s Word!

One Truth of God I would like to mention. It is this—we know that we are, at this moment, forgiven, because we at this moment give to the Lord Jesus Christ that look which brings forgiveness. I will put aside all the past. I will put aside all our experience, all the change of heart which we hope we have undergone and I will put the matter altogether apart from the past. If I never did look to You, Immanuel, crucified for me, I look to You now! If I have never rested in You before, I will rest in You now—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Your kind arms I fall!  
Be You my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All!”*

Oh, then, we are forgiven! We must be forgiven! Never a soul did give that look without finding forgiveness of sin as surely as the Israelite found healing when he looked to the bronze serpent!

So, Beloved, if that is the case, I want you to view this blessing as a personal possession and seek it as such. I would to God that all of you that hear me would seek personal forgiveness at this moment! Do not think of the preacher, or the heavy style in which he sets forth this Truth of God, but think of yourself and your personal need of cleansing! Think nothing, just now, of those that sit at your side, but seek for mercy at the hand of God, each man, each woman, each child for himself, or herself! Pardon is to be had—rest not till you have it! It will not do you any good if all the rest of the congregation should be pardoned if sin should remain upon you!

Breathe, then, the personal prayer to a personal Savior—“God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Trust in Christ for yourself and you shall sing, today, “Who forgives all my iniquities.” Blessed be His name!

IV. I have now a fourth point to call your attention to, and that is, this is A PERFECT BLESSING. “Who forgives all your iniquities.” For, remember, the forgiveness spoken of in the text is a Divine one. It is God that forgives all our iniquities! A man’s forgiveness, when we have wronged him, is to be sought. And when we get it, we shall find, in many instances, that it is a poor, half-hearted affair. Men often say they forgive, “but”— now that very hesitation in their speech shows it is not a full and free forgiveness! But when God does anything, He does it thoroughly.

Now, listen, just this minute. When God charges sin upon a man He does it after a very high standard, for every idle word that man shall speak he shall be brought into judgment. When God condemns man, He does it after an equally elevated standard and when God punishes man, He does it after a solemn and awful manner. The new gods that have lately come up have a little Hell because they are little gods—but my God, the God of the whole earth—has a great Hell and a fearful doom, for what He does is done by rule of strict justice.

Believe me, He pardons to the same scale! All His acts are of a sublime character. The standard of punishment is the standard of forgiveness. You know how He judges, how He condemns, how He punishes—after that same thorough, Godlike manner He forgives! He makes a clean sweep of sin, according to that blessed Word, “The day comes, says the Lord, when the sin of Jacob shall be sought for and it shall not be found: yes, it shall not be, says the Lord.” “I will subdue all their iniquities, and cast their transgressions into the depths of the sea.” “I have blotted out your iniquities as a thick cloud, and as a cloud your sins.” “They shall not be mentioned against you any more, forever!”

Oh, it is a perfect blessing, for it is a Divine pardon and, you see, its completeness is expressed in that word, “all.” “Who forgives all your iniquities.” He does not remove the great ones and leave the little ones to rankle. Nor doe He leave the little ones and leave one great black one to devour us, but, “ALL” of them He covers and annihilates with the effectual Atonement made by His dear Son. And then notice the word which in our text expresses sin—“iniquities.” Pull it to pieces—it is in-equities—the matters in which we are not, according to equity. Sometimes we fall short. Sometimes we go beyond. Sometimes we do not act in equity towards our friends, our relatives, or strangers. We constantly fail to act in strict equity towards God.

Now, He says, all our in-equities—everything in which we fall short of the perfect rule of equity, or go beyond that rule—all these He forgives! What a blessed, comprehensive word this is. I was reading the other day in a very delightful little book, entitled, “Never Say ‘Die,’” which is admirably calculated to comfort a seeking soul, these few words which struck me forcibly. The writer says, “All our righteousness are as filthy rags. If you will bring your good living and your precious righteousness to Christ, you must make sin of the whole lot—there is nothing else you can do with it— and ask to have it all forgiven. The man who will be saved by his own righteousness says hopelessly, ‘die,’ to his own soul. You must cast all this splendid rubbish of yours on the heap along with the oaths and the lies, the drinking and Sabbath-breakings, the foul living—and let the everflowing stream that keeps eddying round wash it all away.”

As I read it, I thought—That is what I will do with mine! I will put my sermons, my prayers, my almsgiving—everything on the same heap as my sins and let them go together! Lord, be pleased to forgive all my inequities, my good works and my bad works. I might have tried to sort them a little, but one is so much like the other that I fling them all overboard and swim to glory on the Cross. We have no hope but in our Lord Jesus—we need pardoning mercy for all we have ever done—for sin has been mixed with it all! I advise you, my Hearer, to put the whole life you have lived into one lump, and say, “Lord, forgive me the whole of it! I cannot acknowledge every sin, for I do not know them all! Sin is such a subtle thing that it has penetrated into my most holy thoughts and desires. But, Lord, cleanse me from all sin through the atoning blood.” “Who forgives all your iniquities.”

What a blessed thing is this! For when God once forgives, He forgives forever! He never plays fast and loose and He never brings to mind, again, that of which He has said, “I will remember it no more.” O my Brothers and Sisters, if you are pardoned once, you are forgiven once and for all! Irreversible acquittals God bestows, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Immutability is stamped upon the patent of our pardon! Until God can change or lie, He never will bring to mind, again, the sin of that man whom He has pardoned. “Your sins are forgiven you—go in peace.”

Now, I want you, practically, to use this head by seeking to obtain this pardon as a complete thing. Hosts of professing Christians never reach to this. Many of you do not believe that you are or can be completely pardoned. But such pardon is possible. Do not rest till you have it! You will never know true peace of mind until it is yours. The Roman Catholic cannot believe that God pardons him altogether and he never knows that he is safe. It is a very poor thing you gain by being a Roman Catholic. If you get the best you can, you go to “purgatory” when you die! It is great cry and very little wool! But in the faith of Jesus Christ you get present and eternal pardon!

However great our cry is, it is never equal to the wool, for what a great blessing it is to receive immediate, absolute, eternal salvation on the spot so that if you live as long as Methuselah the transgressions of all those years are covered! And if you die at once, all your offenses are put away through the precious blood of Jesus Christ! Seek for this heavenly gift! Do not rest till you are as sure of perfect forgiveness as of your own existence—and when you have this glorious gift of Grace say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, who forgives all your iniquities.”

V. In the fifth place, this is a PRICELESS BLESSING. It is a blessing which could not be purchased by a life of holiness. If we have once committed sin and should, from now on, be absolutely spotless, yet our previous sin would absolutely condemn us—

*“Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
You must save and You alone.”*  
Put on a hair shirt and an iron girdle. Fast day and night. Cover yourself with the bruises of your scourging. Starve as a mendicant or shut yourself up in a hermitage—the sin of the past will remain the same. Weep tears of blood, but their crimson will not wash out the crimson of your sin! That spot, that blood-red spot upon the soul defies removal! Wash it with your heart’s blood and it would still be there.  
Though you could bleed as every wave that breaks upon our island’s shores and fill the Atlantic with a crimson flood. Though you should gather all the seas that ever flowed together and wash and wash with niter and much soap till you had polluted all the ocean with your filth—it would still remain. In vain you cry, “Out, damning spot.” The spot abides and will abide unless Almighty love shall take it out forever. Only God Himself can forgive and by Him no price can be accepted in the form of future obedience, for all that you can promise is already due and the promise, itself, will be broken.  
What is more, this forgiveness could not be purchased by an eternity of suffering in Hell. There they lie in anguish, which God grant we may never know, but they are as far off from the expiation of their sin as when they first came there. When the world grows gray and sun and moon die out and time has spun its utmost thread, the last will be as far off from the expiation of their sin as ever! There is no getting rid of sin by suffering! Still must the lost suffer, for still their sin remains. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” as surely as the righteous go away into eternal life. But though it could not be purchased by a life of holiness nor by an eternity of woe, forgiveness has been procured! This pardon which is freely preached today to all who believe in Jesus has been purchased and there is He that procured it, sitting at the right hand of God the Father—a Man like unto ourselves—but yet equal with the Ever-Blessed One!  
If you ask me how He procured forgiveness, I answer that He shows His hands—the scars are there. He shows His feet. He shows His side—the scars of His wounds are there. He shows His heart that was broken for our guilt. He shows His blessed Person which underwent the baptism of Divine wrath that He might deliver us from being plunged into those tremendous deeps! O Son of God, You have redeemed us, but what a price have You paid in the bloody sweat of Your face and the sorrowful breaking of Your heart! And now, today, we accept freely, gladly, what You have so dearly earned!  
What else do we say? Why, that if we are pardoned through such an Atonement, then are we Christ’s forever! We ought to show deep gratitude and the least we can do is to confess, “We are not our own!” We ought to go out singing with all our heart, “He has put away my transgressions and covered my iniquities.” The Lord grant it may be so, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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OUR YOUTH RENEWED  
NO. 3417

A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 24, 1870.

**“Who satisfies your mouth with good things,  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”  
Psalm 103:5.**

IN this delightful Psalm, one remarks how David finds something of praise within him in everything of which he thinks. There are some desponding, morbid, murmuring, ungrateful souls who find reasons for complaining everywhere, but a man of David’s spirit, on the contrary, sucks honey out of every flower and praises God in connection with everything! I noticed, while I was reading just now, how many of these things would have made others mourn, but they only called forth from David’s soul, songs of praise! For instance, “Who forgives all your iniquities”—some would be forever complaining that they had sins and that those sins were a burden, but David sings of sin as pardoned! Some would be mourning before God that they were not well in health, complaining of their sicknesses, but David sang of Him, “Who heals all your diseases.” Morbid minds will be fretting about death and about what might come after death, but David says, “Who redeems your life from destruction.” And now, in the view of his temporal and spiritual blessedness, he pens this verse with which to crown his song, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

I invite you first notice in this verse and as you notice, ask that you may enjoy—  
I. SATISFACTION.  
David speaks of his mouth being satisfied with good things. Satisfaction. A rare word! It rings like a silver bell—satisfaction. The richest man in England has not found it. The greatest conqueror has never won it. The proudest Emperor cannot command it. Satisfaction! It is no more natural to man than it was to the horseleech to cease from craving and crying for itself, “Give! Give!” As well might the sea be thought to be full or its billows to be still, as the heart of man to be thought to be satisfied! It is a spiritual blessing—it is a Divine Grace that comes from the great satisfying God—the God who is, Himself, All-Sufficient, is the only One who can be sufficient to fill the heart of man. Satisfaction! Why, that means enough, and enough is a feast!  
David had enough of temporals and so, I trust, have we. If we are of the Apostle’s mind, we have, for having food and raiment, we are therewith content. David had spiritual riches and that satisfied him, and so have we, for if we have Christ, we have all things, for, first, Christ is All and next, He that spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? For all things are yours, whether things present or things to come; all are yours and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. You have enough, then, for you have all things! Your spirit is content with what it has—no, more than content—you can say with David, “My cup runs over.” In receiving Christ into your soul, you have received more than your soul can hold—you are filled with all the fullness of God!

The text, in speaking of satisfaction, uses terms which denote satisfaction.“Who satisfies your mouth with good things.” In the mouth is the palate. It is the place in which there is a sensuous kind of enjoyment, which is here put as a figure of a higher and spiritual delight. We do not merely receive God’s good mercies—we enjoy them! We have not lost our taste for them. We do not swallow the honey of the Divine Mercy as though it were so much tasteless white of an egg, but we know, through having our senses exercised and taught of the good Spirit, how to get the flavor, the taste of the Word and to enjoy it. “He satisfies your mouth.” We have, all of us, desires after pleasures which are natural to us, but believing men have desires after higher pleasures—and these desires are, for the time being, satisfied until we get into yonder realm where our capacities are enlarged, our desires shall be increased and there, too, we shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and shall drink of the river of His pleasures forevermore! Until then, we are satisfied with Christ, satisfied with His salvation, satisfied with the Holy Spirit, satisfied with all His gracious operations, satisfied with the Covenant of Grace, satisfied with its sureness, satisfied with the largeness of its provisions, satisfied with the love of God, satisfied, indeed, with all that the Lord wills, for we can say that His will is our will! There is enough, then, and there is enjoyment of that enough.  
Note as you take the words, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things.” See the variety of the satisfaction that is given. The mercies bestowed are not only good—they are not a good thing—but “good things.” The Christian’s spiritual wealth consists of all manner of good things. As we showed you last Thursday night—of Christ’s fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace. He gives more Grace. He is the God of all Grace. All sorts of blessings are provided for the Believer and the satisfaction which he enjoys is the result of receiving all the blessings that he can ever need. “He satisfies your mouth with good things,” that is, with pardons bought with blood, with justifying righteousness, perfect and complete—with adoption and all the privileges belonging thereto—with sanctification and all its gracious results! Good things, superlatively good things, Beloved! Not merely on good doctrines and good opinions shall you feed, but on real things, real blessings, and these not all of one sort, nor after one fashion, but like the fruit of that tree which becomes near to the Throne of God, and which bears its fruit every month, and has a variety of fruits to suit the tastes of all who come hungering to eat thereof!  
The excellence also of the mercy which satisfies us is mentioned in the text. “Who satisfies your mouth with good things”—emphatically good. Many of “the good things of this life,” as we commonly say, are only good in a very modified sense. They are easily made into curses and they often become temptations. But the good things of Divine Grace are so good that they never can be anything else but good, and so good that they make our bad things good! I mean that they make our bitter affliction sweet and turn our trials into joys! He that gets Christ has such a good thing that no tongue shall ever tell the goodness it. He that gets everlasting love and all the streams that gush from that deep and fathomless fountain, gets things so good, and in the most superlative sense of that word, that they are like God, Himself, who is essentially good. Ah, Christian, what a happy lot is yours! To have good things from the good God and to have an abundance of them, and to have yourself so ravished in the enjoyment of them that your soul can say, “I am satisfied! It is enough. I am content. My soul is overflowing with the good things of God!”  
Once more, this satisfaction is continual. The word is in the present tense, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things.” It is not, “did satisfy it,” though that is true. He did satisfy my mouth with good things when first I came to Him and perceived the beauty of my Lord Jesus. Often since then has He made His servant to sit at the banquet table and there, in the presence of his enemies has he been fed. But the text is in the present and that means who now satisfies, who, to-morrow when it comes, shall still be your present help and still shall satisfy—who not only will satisfy you in Heaven—though that is true, for I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness—but who even now, as far as your capacity goes, continually satisfies you in things here below, not with things below, but with things above—satisfied with God while yet absent from the Lord. Is not this blessing, being in the present tense, peculiarly delightful? But it is just that to which the worldling cannot come! All his good things are generally in the past or the future. I mean his good spiritual things. He will tell you of what he once felt, or else he hopes that they may yet be in the days to come, and that one of these days he may be saved. But the genuine religion of Christ is known by its bearing the motto of “Today”—present salvation! There is no religion under Heaven except the evangelical Truth of God that teaches present salvation!  
I think I have read some such passage as this by an eminent cardinal, since departed, and gone somewhere—I do not know where, for he has gone somewhere where they have “Masses” for the repose of his soul, and surely that cannot be in Heaven! Surely, they would not need to pray for the repose of the souls that are there! But this departed cardinal says something like this—“How delightful to die after having received the saved viaticum from the hands of God’s priest, with the memorial of the cross upon your bosom and the crucifix upheld by holy hands before your expiring eyes! To pass out of this world with the sound of the passing bell in your ears and then to lie awhile, while gathered round you are the prayers of holy men and blessed virgins consecrated to God in the neighboring convent. To be carried out with the songs of choristers, with the perfume of incense and with attending monks and friars. To be put into holy ground, consecrated by sacred rites, amidst the reading of words long honored by being used by the Holy Catholic Church—to have the consecrated earth saturated with holy water falling upon the coffin lid that bears the memorial of the cross,” and so on, and so on, and so on. How delightful! How delightful he makes it all out to be, as if it all were a theater—nothing more—a piece of show! What good could there be to a soul in all that performance, and all that tag raggery and I know not what besides? What consolation could it be to a departing spirit? But that evidently is the ultimatum, the highest reward that can be obtained by that kind of faith!  
But, Beloved, we speak out of this Book of God what we know and have proved! And we tell you that you may be saved NOW! The pardon of sin is not a thing merely for dying moments— it is a thing for this very present hour! What says David? “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imparts not iniquity; blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered.” What says Paul? “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” I dwell then, with a lingering delight upon the present tense of these words, “Who satisfies”—today—“your mouth with good things”—makes you even now a happy Believer, a rejoicing Believer, a hopeful Believer, a contented child of God, looking for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and hoping to be found among the waiting, worshipping company who “worship Christ Jesus in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.” That is the first thought of the text, then— satisfaction.  
Pass on now to the second thought, which is—  
II. RENEWAL.  
“So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Beloved, there is need of this. Every Christian has need that his soul should be restored— should be refreshed, re-invigorated, newly quickened. As to those who are saved, there is a constant need restoring them to their first love. This is promised in the Words before us. I say there is need of it. There is need of it, first, because of the ordinary wear and tear which operate upon spiritual life, as well as upon every other form of life. You cannot serve God, you cannot praise, you cannot pray, you cannot do anything without some expenditure of strength and, therefore, you need to have that strength renewed. Moreover, in such a world as this, combating with temptations, bearing up against the current of society, and I know not what besides, of difficulty, takes away our strength. We need, therefore, to go and drink again of the brook by the way, that we may lift up our head once again. The ordinary wear and tear of spiritual life requires renewal. Besides that, we are often the subjects of sinful decline. Backsliding is too common a complaint among Christians. We can ascend to the top of the mountain and dwell with God, but our foot soon begins to descend. There is a gravitation towards sinfulness in the best of men. Oh, that it were not so, but we are very conscious that it is so and, therefore, we need to have the renewal.  
And yet again, we sometimes fall into sorrowful spiritual diseases. I mean apart from sin. We may get depressed in spirit. We may be nervous, fearful, timid. We may almost come to the borders of despair. We may cry out with David, “All Your waves and Your billows have gone over me, my heart is consumed because of grief.” We may be brought very low. Well, then, again we shall need renewal. So, what with wear and tear, what with sinful inclination to decline, and what with the sorrowful diseases which may come upon our mind, we often need renewing. Mark, now, the peculiar excellence of the renewing that is spoken of in the text. David says, “So that

 your youth is renewed.” There is great deal to be admired in the youth of the Believer. Youth is the time of beauty. After a while, the furrows are plowed upon our brow, and the gray hairs are scattered here and there, but the young man and the maiden rejoice in the beauty of their youth. And I am sure it is beautiful to see a young Christian. There is something so admirable in his carriage and bearing, in his first ardor his, first love and zeal, his first jealous sensitiveness and tenderness of heart, his carefulness of walk and so on, that we cannot but admire him! But thank God, we need not give up these things when our Christian youth, as to time, has gone! Thank God, He can renew our youth to us spiritually when we grow old bodily! And there is a beauty about the aged Christian who is living near to God and dwelling on the borders of Heaven, quite as fair to look upon as the beauty of the young Believer! So God gives to His people from day to day a peculiar beauty in each season of life—and thus their youth is renewed!  
Youth, again, is the time for vigor. The young man can run. He is strong. He has even waste powers to throw away! And often how strong are the young men in Christ Jesus! They are strong and have overcome the Wicked One. Alas, it sometimes happens that growth in years does not bring growth in Grace—and we have known some who have grown weak and feeble as years have passed over their heads. But God can renew to us all the vigor we ever had! All the strength we had for service during the first 20 years of our Christian life, He can bring back to us again! Though we may have been living under a starving ministry, and so have lost our strength. Though we may have neglected much communion with Christ, and so have lost our vigor, He can give it all back again, and once more we shall run, and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint! Youth, again, is the time for ardor, for fervency, for enterprise. I would not say a word that might depreciate the wisdom and mature prudence of old age, but for all that, the most of things that are done in the world must be done by the young blood. The radical element comes in to stir the conservative element and quicken it into activity. In the Christian Church there must be young blood coming in, and if there is not, it is generally an ill time with that Church. But surely, Beloved, it need not be that our first ardor, and enterprise, and hopefulness should leave us. God can renew it to us at any time during our spiritual career. He can renew our youth like the eagle’s by renewing our courage for Him, our confidence in Him, our energy towards Him, our determination for Him, our willingness to run risks in His cause, our ardor to tell to others what Christ’s love has been in our hearts. If you have lost that youth, cry to God tonight for it and He, by His Spirit, will renew your youth to you! “Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Youth, too, is the time for joy. We expect young people to be merry, and young Christians may well make merry and be glad, now that they are brought into the house of feasting. God often makes the early part of our Christian career to be smooth—He screens us from the harder trials that will be necessary for us afterwards—but there is no reason why the joy of the Lord should ever depart from a Christian.  
I have not known many, but I have known some few Christians who are just as happy and joyful as they ever were in the brightest period of their lives and have continued so by the twenty years together! I do not believe that spiritual decline, though it is very common, is at all inevitable. I believe it to be as unnecessary as it is sinful. We might always retain that early joy and delight. I must confess my own experience is that whatever joy I had in Christ 20 years ago, I have much more, now. Whatever I had that could delight me concerning Him was shallow and superficial, then, compared with the deeper delight my spirit finds in His service, in His work, in His people and especially in Himself! There is no reason why we should not continue to be young. A dear friend of yours who has lately gone to Heaven, who was close on the verge of 80 years, and whom you all knew well, why, he was as much a boy as any of us in the things of God! There was not one among us that was more hopeful or more enterprising than was our dear venerable father. We had only just to think of any good thing for Christ, and instead of being, as some have a tendency to be when they get old, rather inclined to be a drag on the wheel for fear lest the young people should go too fast, he was always ready to gird up his loins and run like Elijah before the chariot, and do a little more than anybody else if he could! I pray that that may be our case—that we may bring forth fruit in old age to show that the Lord is upright! So may it be with us, and right on as long as ever we shall live may He renew our youth like the eagle’s! I shall now need your attention for only a few minutes for a third point. We have had satisfaction and renewal. The third thing in the text is—  
III. A SIMILITUDE.  
“So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” How is that? Socrates and the old naturalists used to say that when eagles get to be very old, they lost their old beak and talons, and feathers, and turned young again. I suppose people used to believe that in those times, but happily there is nobody who believes such rubbish as that now! I am quite sure that David did not believe it, for my persuasion is the more I look into the Bible, though some have said that the Bible was only meant to teach us religion and that we must not look for accuracy as to scientific facts, that that is a mistake—and that the Bible never makes a mistake in natural history, in physics, or in anything else—is as much Inspired about one thing as about another! There is nothing in this text to lead us to believe that David meant that—nothing at all! Some have thought and I think they are correct, that the allusion is to the newly-molting of the eagle. As with every other bird at that time, they appear haggard, and then when their feathers are grown again, it makes them appear to renew their youth. I observe that many naturalists whose works I have consulted on the subject declare that the molting of the eagle is not sufficiently severe to produce any appreciable change, and that David must have been a very acute observer, indeed, if he could have detected such an alteration, and they seem to think that the allusion is to the well-known longevity of the eagle, which lives on, and on, and on, when many other birds have passed through many generations. The grand old monarch of the craggy rocks is still young when generations of other birds have passed away. So our youth is renewed like the eagle’s—that is to say, our spiritual life continues on, and on, and on through time—right into eternity!  
Let me, then, conduct your thoughts to the eagle for a minute. How is the eagle’s youth renewed? I suppose in four things—in its sight, its flight, its might and its fighting.  
The eagle has a keen eye, but its eye would grow dim unless there was a constant renewal of its youth and, therefore, its eyesight is renewed. The eagle-eye belongs to every gracious man. He can see farther than the eagle can. He can see beyond the gates of pearl—he can see farther than that—to the Throne of God! Yes, farther than that—into the heart of God. He can say—

*“The streams of love I trace  
Up to their fountain, God.  
And in His mighty breast I see  
Eternal thoughts of love to me.”*

But the eagle eye of faith is often clouded with unbelief, and it is a blessing for us that God increases our faith and that, once again, we can see invisible things and rejoice to behold what has never been given to mortal eye to see.

The eagle is a bird of strong flight, and that flight may be reckoned as a part of its youth which is renewed. Large as it is, sometimes measuring from six to eight feet broad when its wings are outspread, yet as soon as it vanishes out of sight it is lost in the blaze of the sun. At another time the eagle is on its flight, simply making progress. So with the Christian. His youth is renewed. He mounts upwards in communion with God, higher, higher, higher. His motto is—

*“Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!  
This still my cry shall be—  
Nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee!”*

Up he mounts like the eagle, or at other times he goes onward in his Christian pathway, going from strength to strength until he appears before his God. Now, it is a mercy for us that the Lord is pleased to renew our power of fellowship with Himself—our power of making progress in the Divine Life—just as He renews the eagle’s youth.

The eagle has great power and might, too. He had need to be strong, or when he carries his prey to his young ones, he might soon weary. And you and I have souls to feed, and work to do for God and for His Kingdom—and we need that our might should be renewed, like the eagle’s, that we may be strong for every service imposed upon us.

And then the eagle is made to fight. It smells the battle afar off and delights in carnage. And the Christian, though he is a man of peace, is also a man of war. From his youth up he has to contend with his corruptions and fight with spiritual wickedness in high places! And he needs that his power to fight should be daily renewed, even as is the eagle’s. May we experience day by day what it is to have our youth renewed in these respects. But, now, let us ask the pressing and practical question, how is it that the eagle’s youth is renewed? Is it not because there is a life within which renews it? God has so constituted the eagle that it shall live on— God has so constituted a Believer that he shall live on. He has put a living, incorruptible seed within us that cannot die, and the Water of Life that He has given to us, is in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life! Therefore is our youth renewed like the eagle’s. There is a holy nature, a spiritual immortality of Grace bestowed upon us and, therefore, is our youth renewed.

The eagle’s strength is renewed by the food it eats. That is indicated in the text, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” When the eagle has satisfied his hunger, he is strong again and when you and I have fed upon the Word of God— especially upon the Incarnate Word of God—when we have been privileged to eat His flesh and drink His blood, as spiritual men know how, ah, then again, our youth has been renewed!

The eagle’s strength is renewed by the air he breathes. Not here below, in this smoky atmosphere, but up there, in the clear azure, where all is bright—there does the eagle breathe the pure air and thus renew his strength. So the Christian renews his strength, not here among groveling gold hunters or pleasure hunters, or fame hunters, but up, up there in the rarified atmosphere of communion with God! There he grows strong, again, and comes down from the Heaven of heavens with his face glowing with the radiance of renewed youth, renewed by breathing the atmosphere of the skies!

The eagle’s youth is renewed as the season returns, or, if the reference I gave to some naturalists is correct, there is a season for renewal. So when the times for God’s Spirit to visit us with times of refreshing come, then, and our strength is renewed. When we feel once more the Holy Spirit bedewing us and our heart gets to be like Gideon’s fleece and we are saturated, then, like the eagle’s, our strength is renewed!

But I shall weary you, for there is so much scope here, if I continued to speak. I shall rather leave you to think the matter over than attempt to work out the fullness of such a text as this. And thus I must bring you to the last Truth of God which I desire to enforce—

IV. A DIVINE QUICKENER.  
Does not David say, “Who satisfies your mouth with good things”?— referring here to God, Himself. To make short work of this last point, let me say to every Believer here who has been satisfied, who has had Grace restored to him and his youth renewed like the eagle’s—you have had all this from God! You have never had your soul renewed from anywhere or anyone else but from Him! You have never had your mouth filled with good things except by God. Every temporal mercy has His mark upon it, for He sent it. Those houses, those children, that competence of yours— all came from Him. As to every spiritual blessing, you must see His mark thereon—  
*“There’s never a gift His hand bestows,  
But cost His heart a groan.”*  
Well, it all comes from God! Then remember that and let it be all the dearer to you! Let it make your soul cling still closer to God to think that all these blessings have come from Him.  
Well, then, if all has come from God, be it remembered with that fact that all has been through God. From Him and through Him—I mean that no mercy would have been a mercy if God Himself had not made the mercy—and that no spiritual gift could have been yours unless God Himself had been in the gift! In fact, there is no good thing until you get God Himself—  
*“Less than Yourself cannot suffice,  
My comfort to restore.”*  
Life is nourished, not so much by bread, as by God’s decree that bread should nourish us, for, “man shall not live by bread, alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.” So the ordinances do not feed your soul, it is God IN the ordinances! It is not the sacramental bread and wine. It is not Baptism. It is not coming up to listen to a poor mortal like ourselves. It is not even private prayer—it is God IN the prayer, God IN the preacher, God IN the ordinance, so that you not only have everything from God, but that which satisfies and renews you is God Himself! Oh, to say, “My Lord and my God: the Lord is the portion of my soul!” This is sweetness, indeed.  
Well, then, as you get everything from God, and by God, ascribe everything to God. Let nothing pass by without praise. Reckon that nothing comes to you by chance. Do not conclude anything to be your desert or your earning. Bless God for it all! “Oh, clap your hands, all you people. Come into His courts with thanksgiving. Praise Him with cymbals, even the high-sounding cymbals.” Let Him have the best of your songs, for you have the best of His gifts. Praise Him with a new song, for you have new mercies for which to sing.  
And if you thus ascribe everything to God, take care that you use everything for God. Let your temporal mercies be consecrated to Him. Give Him the first fruits of all your increase, so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst with new wine. Give to God all your spiritual strength and whenever you feel that you are renewed in it, do not shake yourselves as though your strength were your own, and you might use it as you like—but when the Spirit of the Lord moves upon you as He did upon Samson in the camp of Dan, go out and smite the Philistines as he did. Go and help in the Master’s work and the Master’s children—watch over the Master’s sheep, fight the Master’s foes and thus shall you continue to have your mouth satisfied with good things and your youth renewed because the Lord will see that you are not wasting it, or spending it upon yourselves, but giving it all to Him.  
I am sure I grieve much that such a text as this should not have a bearing upon you all. But alas, there are some here, there are some here who are not satisfied and you never will be, my dear Hearer, till you get Christ! There are some here whose youth is not renewed. No, it were a pity that it should be. You must be born-again! You must, you MUST be born-again! Oh, that you may now be born-again, for otherwise for you to renew your youth would be to renew your sins and increase your ruin! My dear Friend, what you need most is a new heart—and there is only One who can give it to you, and that is He who made Heaven and earth, even Christ Jesus! What you need is to have your sins washed away and it is only He who can do it, who first filled the channels of the deep and who now can wash away your sins in His own blood. Trust Him and it is done! Trust Him and it is done altogether. Trust Him and it is done altogether and forever! He that believes in Him is saved, for He who cannot lie has said it, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Be obedient to that double command and, in obedience, you shall find that God is faithful to His Covenant, to His Son and to you to whom the promise is made—and you shall be saved! God bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 42.**

Verse 1. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul, after You, O God. It is said that when they cannot find water, they sometimes let loose a hart, which, flying over the desert sand, by instinct seems to scent out the water brook. If he cannot find it, however, the stag is subject to a burning thirst. He stands and pants. His sides heave while he thirsts. So says David, “As the hart pants (or “brays”) “after the water brooks.”

2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Not God’s worship only. Not God’s people, but God Himself he thirsts for! Oh, for such a thirst! The next best thing to having God is to have an insatiable thirst for Him. Do you think a soul ever could be cast away that longed for God? Impossible! There is never a soul in Hell that had any sincere longings after God. Grace is in your heart, dear Hearer. That thirst is Grace if you are longing after the living God.

3. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is your God? “You are forsaken. God has forgotten you.” At the very thought of this, he had the salt meat of his tears and nothing else, for there is nothing that touches a Christian’s heart and wounds him to the quick like that. “Where is your God?”

4, 5. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. See how he clings to God in the dark! When the question cuts through his soul, “Where is your God?” he seems to say, “I will none but Him. I will follow hard after Him. He is everything to me. I will be sick till He heals me. I will be in the dark till He gives me light. I look to none but to my God.”

6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar. Or the little hill. I knew You there. There did You meet with me and I remember this. And can You have met me in love so often, and will You cast me away now? You did there manifest Yourself to me—as You do not unto the world, and You are an unchanging lover. Will You not come to me again?

7. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterspouts. Heaven’s troubles and earth’s trials seem to clasp hands and form a waterspout. The deep of Your dark purposes seems to echo to the deep of human malice and Satanic wrath. “Deep calls to deep.”

7. All Your waves and Your billows are gone over me. You have concentrated an ocean upon my devoted head!  
8. Yet. Oh, what a glorious, “yet,” that is! How it swims! Never was there a swimming suit like that which is made of hope!  
8. The LORD will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. How dear God gets to be to a gracious man in the time of trouble. Just now he called God the health of his countenance. Now he calls Him his very life. “My prayer unto the God of my life.”  
9-11. I will say unto God my Rock, Why have You forgotten me? Why am I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me while they say daily unto me, Where is your God? Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted, within me? Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God. Or, as the old Psalm puts it—

*“Yes, my own God is He.”*  
A sweet collocation of words, indeed! “Yes, my own God is He.” He seems to revel in God—to find intense delight in God. God is everything to him!

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1171 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LORD CHIDING HIS PEOPLE  
NO. 1171

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 3, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever.” Psalm 103:9.**

THIS verse has reference only to the children of God. The Psalm is for them—they alone can sing it and this statement concerns them only—for this reason, that the wrath of the great Judge of all the earth is removed from every true child of God. Our sins were laid upon Jesus Christ and He bore them for us. The penalty due to us on account of them, or its equivalent, has been endured by Jesus Christ, our Substitute. Therefore, as before the Throne of God there is no accusation against a Believer, the justice of God has no anger towards him. “Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comfort me,” is the proper language of every justified man.

But let it never be forgotten that in pursuance of His gracious plan, God, who has blotted out our offenses as rebellious subjects, has now placed us in a new relationship, for, by adoption and the new birth, we have become His children and He is our Father. Though He neither can nor will ever summon us before the bar of His jurisdiction, either to charge us with sin or condemn us for it, inasmuch as Jesus Christ has put that sin away, yet, as our Father, He exercises discipline among His family, and we, as His children, are both chided and chastened for our faults. The sword of justice no longer threatens us, but the rod of parental correction is still in use. The judge no longer condemns, but the Father chides—“For what son is he whom his father chastens not.”

Remember, then, that we are not about to speak of Believers under the Law, or the anger arising out of the breach thereof—by His Grace we are quite clean from all the mire of that slough of legality. We are about to treat of Believers as the adopted, twice-born children of God—and of the rule of the Lord’s household—and the chiding and chastisement which are necessary to it. The text seems to me to say two things. First, He will chide. Secondly, He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.

I. The text very plainly says to us who choose to hear it, HE WILL CHIDE. It is implied that He will be angry, otherwise it were not necessary to say that, “He will not keep His anger forever.” Why will He chide? There are many answers, but we can mention only a few. He will chide His own dearly beloved children, first, because if He did not do so it would seem like winking at sin. Eli did not restrain his sons or chasten them as he should have done and, therefore, judgments fell upon his house. God is not foolishly gentle like that aged priest—He will sorely smite His children if they follow iniquity.  
David had never displeased Adonijah at any time in saying, “Why have

You done so?” And therefore on his death-bed the old man heard the news that his much-indulged son was seeking to snatch the crown from Solomon, his appointed heir. God is no indulgent David—He does not spare His children the chidings due to their sins. “The Lord your God is a jealous God.” In His people, sin is sin, and even yet more heinous than in those who are outside of the family, seeing that they sin against greater light and greater love. Sin is in the elect of God exceedingly sinful. The Lord regards it as an intolerable evil which His soul hates. It must be cleansed as by burning, for He will bring His people through the fire and refine them as silver is refined. Has He not said of His chosen, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities”? A man may suffer a stranger’s child to do many wrong things without laying his hand upon him. But he makes his own child to smart if he dares to disobey.

God chastens and chides His children, next, because if He did not, others of the family would follow their ill example. If I knew a man who lived in sin and yet enjoyed the light of God’s Countenance, should I not naturally conclude that I, also, may live as he does and yet walk in the light as God is in the light? If we had heard of David’s sin with Bathsheba and had never read of his horror of soul, his broken bones and bleeding heart— should we not have inferred that we, also, might fall into the same filthiness—and find it a very small matter to return into the way of righteousness again? Every father among you knows that he has often to chasten his child’s bad behavior—not only for its own sake but for the sake of the younger children—for if the fault were overlooked they might come to do the same.

Sometimes a frown which might have been spared the individual, considered by himself, must be put upon the parent’s face for the sake of brothers and sisters, lest they should fall into like fault. Remember that the Lord has a large family—and like a wise father He considers the interests of all. Consequently He does not allow sin to go unchided, lest it breed folly in others. Moreover, the world outside the regenerated family looks on with unfriendly eyes. If the erring child of God were never chided or chastened, then would worldlings say, “What does it matter that God denounces sin in us, when He winks at it in His own family?”

Should we not say of a minister who preached holiness, but who suffered his own sons to indulge in vice, “Why is it that he does not begin at home?” Is it not natural for us to think that those who are in real earnest for piety and holiness will be sure to show it by the way in which they restrain their own children and conduct the affairs of their own house? If we see that a Christian man’s daughters are the wildest of the group and the most frivolous of the frivolous, do we not say at once, “What a pity it is that he speaks about evil in others and yet does not set his own house in order”? It is mentioned as an essential qualification for a pastor that “he rules well his own house; for if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?” Of the deacons, also, it is said that they must “rule their children and their own houses well,” from which we gather that a man who cannot govern his children can never be anything but a rear-rank soldier of Christ, a poor, feeble Christian at best.

Now, shall it ever be said that the great Father of Spirits does not enforce discipline in His own house? Will the greatest of all Householders suffer it to be whispered throughout the world that He allows His favorites to do as they please, and His darlings to indulge in sin without chiding them? God forbid! It must not be so imagined! What says the Apostle Paul in Hebrews? “Even our God is a consuming fire.” He does not say that God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire, for God in Christ is our God—and in that Character He is a consuming fire, burning with infinite jealousy against sin! The terrified hypocrites in Zion, who are spoken of by Isaiah, asked a hard question, but it is one which we must answer—“Who among us shall dwell with that devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Only he can so dwell who “walks righteously and speaks uprightly,” “but he shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks, his bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure” (Isa. 33:14-16).

It is not possible for the thrice holy Jehovah to act otherwise towards sin than as fire to feel, hence those who dwell with Him must be pure. God must, for the outside world’s sake, judge among His own people, separating the precious from the vile, and passing even the precious gold through the fire to cleanse it from its dross—thus making His people to be a holy people—separated unto His fear. His fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem. Judgment begins at the house of God.

But, Beloved, there is another reason which more nearly concerns ourselves—God must chide us when we do evil, for our own sakes, or else the evil would lie festering in us, breeding I know not what of deadly mischief. Often we do not know sin to be sin till the Lord chides us for it, or we do not perceive the high degree of its sinfulness till we hear His solemn tones rebuking us lovingly but sharply that we may be sound in His fear. This Divine chiding lays open the sore which else might have worked inwardly to mortal sickness. Besides, if sin were not chided, one fault would lead to another and we should go from bad to worse. That gradual decline which saps the bodily constitution of many would happen to our souls—and we should fall little by little. Gray hairs would be upon us here and there— and we should not know it.

The Lord reins us up, when our steps are almost gone, and gives us a sharp blow such as a skillful driver deals to a stumbling horse. And then we run more carefully, pick up our feet in the dangerous pathway and so hold on and hold out to the end. It is necessary, Beloved, and for our good, that we should bear His chiding, else sin would, before long, pierce us through with many sorrows. I am never afraid for my Brethren who have many troubles, but I often tremble for those whose career is prosperous. To be emptied from vessel to vessel with trouble is often the best thing which can befall us. But to stand at ease till the lees subside, and yet be there, is the greatest danger of Christians in these days. The dregs of sin fall to the bottom out of sight because we are not agitated by—and then we get the notion that we are wholly refined and clear from sin—

when it is only because we are not stirred that our impurities do not rise to the surface.

Brothers and Sisters, it is good, sometimes, to be stirred up with a temptation that you may see what a Hell there is in the depravity of your nature—and what a fiend you are apart from the Grace of God! This humbles you, drives you to prayer and makes you cry out for real purity—and so it is a blessed thing. But to have ease and freedom from toil, never to have your temper tried, never to have your patience exercised—to have a long period of prosperity—is often to breed in you an estimate of yourself which is totally false. You are no better than other men, but you happen not to be so much tempted as other men—and so you become conceited, which is one of the most grievous of calamities.

Now, the Lord can see the residue which we do not see. He knows what lees are at the bottom of the vessel and, therefore, He chides us, tells us of our secret faults and makes our faces to be suffused with blushes, though just before this we were full of self-exultation. Remember, also, that while sin would lie in us and fester, and we should also grow conceited, we may be sure that we should never attain any high position in Grace if it were not for the chidings of the Lord. His rebukes throw us on our faces before the Cross and we are then nearer Heaven than at any other time. Beloved, if we become satisfied with what we are, we shall cease to struggle after anything better—and become stunted professors.

There is grave cause in every one of us for dissatisfaction with our condition, from one point of view or another and, therefore, it is a thousand mercies that the Divine reproofs for our weakness of faith, for the coldness of our love, for the distance of our walk with Him. The Lord’s corrections are the thorns in our nest which make us soar towards Heaven! His chiding shows us our emptiness and leads us to apply to the fullness which is prepared for us.

I cannot, however, stop to show you many more of the wise, tender, fatherly, gracious reasons why the Lord chides His people, but I will answer another question. How does He do it? I answer, sometimes, He rebukes His people by the sin itself. They sow it and He lets them reap it—there is no more fitting retribution than for the backslider in heart to be filled with his own ways. If you sow wild oats they will make bitter cakes when they are reaped and ground—and you are made to eat them. The Lord treats us as Aaron treated Israel—he took their golden calf and ground it to powder, strewed it on the water and made them drink.

Very sharp and burning is the concoction made from our darling sins. More bitter than gall is the wine which flows from the grapes of transgression. Sin’s result is its punishment. Abraham’s unbelief chastened itself when he found his wife taken by the Philistine king. A worse case is that of Lot. He did not keep the separated path as he ought to have done, but chose to dwell with the men of Sodom. And when he saw all his property destroyed by the flames which fell from Heaven—when his sons-in-law perished and his wife was turned into a pillar of salt—he must have seen in his sorrows the very image of his sins. Who brought this upon you, Lot? Who made you what you are? What but your worldliness? And who but yourself, in your greedy choice of the well-watered plain of Sodom, and your forsaking of the pilgrim walk with God?

Child of eternal love, your God will gather twigs for His rod out of your own garden! Like Gideon, He will chastise you with thorns and briers— and those sharp teachers He will gather from the neglected corner of the field which you should have cultivated for your Lord. Frequently He chastens His people by His Providence. Chastisements come to us through sickness of body and depression of spirit, losses in business or failures of enterprise. Trouble in the family or attacks from the outside world may be other ways, but here we must be careful to discriminate, for all trials are not chastisements—many are sent as tests of integrity, or illustrations of faith. Some are sent to afford us opportunities of winning crowns for Christ and honor for Him.

In fact, trials may be regarded very often as great favors and special privileges. “Whom the Lord loves He chastens,” and, “Every branch that bears fruit He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” You must not think, because you are afflicted, that you have been more sinful than others, for it may be you are more beloved! Tribulation is often a gracious reward for faithfulness, affording, as it does, an opportunity for the exercise of yet higher virtue! Yet many troubles are manifestly chastisements. When Rebekah saw her darling son driven away from his father’s house, was not that a chastisement for her teaching him lies? When afterwards Jacob found himself deceived by Laban, what was that but a chastisement for the deceit which he had practiced against his brother Esau?

God’s Providence is disciplinary towards His own household—David’s sin was followed by a pestilence. Hezekiah’s proud display of his riches to the Babylonian ambassadors brought on captivity. Asa’s transgression caused the rest of his life to be troubled with wars. A happy life can be changed into one of care and affliction by careless living, for God will order all events for the correction of His rebellious child. But the Lord as often chides His people by the withdrawal of privileges. Full assurance is one of the first blessings taken from those who wander—faith burns dimly and those who could once read their title clear, now spell it out with many questions by a smoking lamp—whose light is but a glimmer. They formerly could say, “I know.” Now they can barely cry, “I hope.” Their faith is weak because it does not lie, now, in the same atmosphere, since the manifested love of God has ceased to shine upon them.

The Lord also denies His blessing to the means of Grace and they become wells without water and clouds without rain. The sermon is not sweet as it used to be. Even the Bible is not so comforting as before. The joyous assemblies are now sorrowful, the feasts are turned to fasts, the Bethels to Bochims, the hymns to howls. The wail of the mourner will be, “O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone round about me.” Private prayer soon becomes a weariness and all the exercises of secret devotion are carried on as matters of duty rather than as sources of enjoyment.  
The Father also chides His children by taking from them their fellowship with Himself. They dare no longer sing, “My beloved is mine, and I am His.” Their cry is, “Where has my Beloved gone, that I may seek Him?” At the Lord’s Table the emblems are no longer gates of pearl to admit to the secret chambers of the King. The Beloved is gone and the sun is eclipsed. Now they are in the dark, though once they basked in the sunlight. Some here know all about this—and they will tell you that there is no worse chastening than to be left of God and deprived of His present smile. Then there will happen to you a great withdrawal of power in prayer. You used to ask and have—but now you are made to wait and knock long and loud before the gate opens to you.

Once you were such a favorite with the King that when you had His ear you spoke to Him for your child, and that child’s soul was given to you! You sought favors and they came into your bosom at once. You told the Well-Beloved your daily troubles with sweet familiarity—and they were all relieved at once. Whatever you asked in prayer, you received, because you kept His Commandments. But now you have walked contrary to Him and He walks contrary to you. The heavens are as brass above you and your prayer comes back to you unanswered. Thus does the Lord chide you. It happens, also, that the erring Christian’s influence over others fades away. “When a man’s ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” But when he gets out of step with God, his enemies take license to rage.

Look at David. Did not the Lord let loose upon him that cursing Shimei and open the mouth of Sheba, the son of Bichri, because he had sinned? As for Solomon, the great king, what cause had he to be afraid of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, or Hadad the Edomite, or Rezon of Damascus— until the day when he had cause to be afraid of his offended God? The lions are chained for Daniel, “the man greatly beloved,” but they break loose upon the man who follows afar off, and roar upon him till he denies his Master.

At times the Lord will chasten His servants by taking away all their success in service. They preached and souls were saved. But now they preach and there are no conversions. They went to the Sunday school class and the children’s hearts were melted while they taught. It is not so now. Barrenness has fallen upon all their fields. Their land is sown with salt. Their vine forgets her fruit, for the Lord has said, “Inasmuch as you have left Me and sinned against Me, I also will leave you to your devices till you mourn and repent and turn unto Me.” May my Lord never thus chide me—I would choose any plague rather than that of barrenness.

Moreover, our heavenly Father chides by His Holy Spirit. Many of us know it is for the Spirit of God to speak softly in our hearts and tell us we have done wrong the very moment we have transgressed. And happy is that man who bows before that Voice, for he will thus escape the rod, since the Lord never comes to blows when words will suffice. The Spirit of God often sends home the reproofs of Scripture to our hearts—while we are reading the Word we feel that it searches us and rebukes us! So, also, the Lord will employ His ministers to chide us. Little is that ministry worth which never chides you! If God never uses His minister as a rod, depend upon it, He will never use him as a pot of manna, for the rod of Aaron and the pot of manna always go together—and he who is God’s true servant will be both to your soul.

The Lord will also chide you through your own conscience, causing you to judge and condemn yourself. The Spirit of God will quicken your understanding and then it will be said of you as of David, “David’s heart smote him.” It is hard hitting when the heart smites, for it comes to such close quarters! But blessed is that man who can thus be corrected—it is a sad sign when conscience is too dead to be of any service in this direction. I believe our heavenly Father, at times, chides His people through Church discipline. I do not mean the discipline carried on by us through the minister, deacons and the Church itself. I refer to that solemn Church discipline which goes on in the Churches and is often unobserved.

Paul said of the disorders in the Corinthian Church, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” Now, there is no reason to believe that these visitations of the Lord upon the Churches have ceased. Indeed, I am persuaded they have not. I have seen those who have walked inconsistently in this place die, one after another. When their inconsistencies have not been such as I could touch, but such as have grieved the children of God, the Lord has, Himself, executed discipline.

Many cases which I shall never relate are written down in the tablets of my memory with this verdict, “Removed by the discipline of God.” I have seen others blighted in fortune, chastened in body and especially depressed in spirit as the result of grieving the Spirit of God in the Church. Church sins, such as injure peace and unity, dampen zeal and enterprise, or hinder prayer, or grieve holy men, are surely visited with stripes. There is no need for us to root up the tares, for the Spirit of God does it by His own processes. That same spirit that was in Peter and smote Ananias and Sapphira is still in the Church, not destroying souls, but taking away life or health as a solemn discipline upon grave offenses beyond the reach of human jurisdiction.

I do not say that it is so in all Churches, for some Churches are barely Churches of Christ at all. But when a Church lives in the light and when the Lord blesses that Church, and the Spirit of God is there, discipline from God will be decisive, for the Lord is very jealous for His name in such places. Depend upon it, one of the most awful conditions a man can hold, while it is also one of the most blessed, is to be in membership with a Church that is much loved and smiled upon by God—for there is a searching wind of discipline sweeping through it continually of a more solemn kind than I shall care further to describe just now.

Now let us ask, when does God chide? I will answer very briefly, that He does not chide for every sin. His Word chides for every sin, but I mean that the Lord does not, for every fault, actually chasten us in the sense here intended. He is angry when a sin has not been mourned over and repented of. When it is known to be sin and yet committed again—when it

threatens to become chronic, so that the man will continue in it and it will become habitual—He is sure to chide. When a sin has special flagrancy about it—when it indulges the grosser lusts, or some utterly contemptible passion—or is associated with pride and presumption, He sis sure to chide. Surely, also, He will rebuke when the opulence follows upon high privileges. If you lie in God’s bosom you must watch that you do not offend—a common subject may do without punishment—but he who is the king’s favorite must not even think of it.

We will take from strangers, remarks which would wound us terribly if they came from those we love or friends. If you are among the king’s courtiers he will watch your walk with a jealous eye. Chiding is sure to come when the offender is not in circumstances which would suggest an excuse for his fault, such as a sudden temptation, or a fierce trial. Anything like a deliberate act of sin is certain to bring down the Father’s anger. When the poor man in his extremity acts as he should not to gain bread for his babes, God will never view his offense in the same light as the greed of the man of wealth. Is not that an incidental lesson of Nathan’s parable in which the rich man’s many flocks aggravate his robbery of the poor man’s ewe lamb?

Brethren, the sin which in me may be very grievous, might be comparatively overlooked in you. And the sin which in you is pestilent before high Heaven, might be far less grievous in another Brother whose circumstances are less favorable than yours, whose temptations are stronger and whose natural temperament, perhaps, may have a weakness in that direction. Anyway, the Lord does chasten His people and displays both wisdom and love in so doing.

II. We have been gazing at the black cloud, now let us look at the silver lining. Here is the text, itself, in its sweetness—“HE WILL NOT ALWAYS CHIDE.” What does that mean? It means that He will not chide for every fault. Of course, as I have already said, His Word chides even a sinful thought in His people, but the Lord does not fall to blows about it—does not grow angry so that we feel His anger for every fault—but only for some, else He would be chiding every minute! It means, too, that He does not chide long. Oh, how often does He just chide for a moment and then He has done, like a mother who speaks an angry word to her child and kisses it the next minute—

*“He will not always chide,  
And when His strokes are felt,  
His strokes are fewer than our crimes,  
And lighter than our guilt.”*

It means, again, that He does not hold any grudges. That is the real meaning of the second clause. The words, “His anger,” are in italics—they are not in the Hebrew—they are supplied by our translators to complete the sense. It means just this, “neither will He keep a grudge against us.” Many will say, “I forgive you,” but you know very well what sort of forgiveness it is. They pardon you because they cannot help themselves and they forgive until the first opportunity comes of showing their spite. Not so with God! He has no grudge against His children. He smites them and has done with it. Whenever God uses a rod on His children, He always burns it as soon as ever He has done with it. He does not put it up by the mirror as I have seen it in some families, but He destroys it, for He hates the sight of it.

Thus He used Sennacherib as a rod, and then He broke him in pieces. He used Babylon for the same purpose and then blotted it out of existence. He employed Assyria, also, but He destroyed her power. The rod reminds Him of His children’s cries and He cannot endure it. The text especially means that there is no eternal wrath for a child of God. He may be angry with me, but my soul, in her deepest agony, clutches at this thought, “He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.” Anger forever is for the ungodly. Oh, you unconverted ones, He will keep His anger forever against you! So long as God’s Word is to be understood as it stands, we shall believe that as surely as His love is everlasting, so is His anger eternal against the impenitent! He will keep His anger forever against you, but not against Believers.

Blessed be His name, when the rod makes the bluest welts we may still rejoice that He will not slay us, “neither will He keep His anger forever.” I may lie tossing on the bed of pain, but I shall never make my bed in Hell! I may be brought to poverty, but not to Perdition! I may suffer loss, but I shall not, myself, be lost eternally! What a comfort is this! The positive meaning of the text is that the Lord will soon leave off chiding—but when will He leave off chiding? Beloved, He will refrain from chastening when we begin repenting—when we come to tears—then He will cease from rebukes. He wants to make us see the sin and mourn it. And then will He cease to see it and forgive it!

He will chide till we come to Jesus Christ as we came at first. When He brings us to our knees with, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” He will no more send us away unheard than He sent the publican away unblest. Go, poor Prodigal, and weep your confession into your Father’s bosom—and He will not make mention of chiding—for He forgives graciously and upbraids not. He will chide us till we forsake our sin. The rod and our backs will never part till our hearts and sin are separated. When we put an end to sin, there shall be an end to chastening. Often the Lord will not refrain from chiding till the results of the sin as well as the sin, itself, shall have been removed. He will chasten us till our bad example shall have been, in a measure, counteracted by our sorrows.

For instance, David’s foul sin would have done great mischief to the Church, but David’s bitter repentance has become a cure for that evil. When Christian people are able to see that you have to suffer and sorrow because of your sin, then, as far as they are concerned, God’s reason for chiding you will have ended—and He will turn to you in infinite mercy. Do you inquire of me, why is it that God will not always chide His people? Blessed be God, there are many reasons for it! One is because He does not mean to confuse chastisement with punishment! The Law is angry forever, but the Gospel is full of pity. God would not have His children treated as if they were slaves—they have not come to Sinai, but to Zion.  
Moreover, if the Lord did always chide, our spirits would fall before

Him, for we would be crushed. When He rebukes, our beauty fades away like the moth. And if He continued to do so we should die. It is always a sad thing, when a parent crushes a child’s spirit, as is sometimes done, and the child is made obedient and stupid, too. God will not thus injure His children and, therefore, He will not always chide. To chide too much might lead to other sins, for if the sin is love of pleasure, we might be chided into despondency, unbelief, despair and I know not what! The great Father stays His hand, lest in driving out one devil He should drive 10 in, as some parents do.

He will not always chide, lest His enemies should exult over His people, for they are always ready to say, “Aha, so we would have it.” The wicked world is glad to exult over a chastened saint, but we can say, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy, for the Lord will not always chide.” He has said, “For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercy will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord my Redeemer.” After all, remember that when God chastens His children He loves them just as much as when He caresses them. There is no change in Jehovah’s love, though there may be changes in His ways of showing it.

It never pleases God to chasten His children. He does not afflict willingly. When He sees His beloved broken down and humble, He is pleased with their humility. But He grieves for their misery. Judgment is His strange work. He delights to see His people rejoice—He is a happy God— and He loves to have a happy people. Now, if he always chastened them, they would be always wretched and, therefore, He will not always chide lest the sweet fruits of the Spirit, which are joy and peace, should never be brought forth in their souls.

Beloved, are you being chided this morning? Then let me give you this word of good cheer—when you were a sinner, dead in sin and had no thought of Him nor desire towards Him, yet He came to you in love. Do you think that now He will reject you? You whom He has bought with blood? You who have lain in His bosom? You who have known, in days gone by, sweet fellowship with Him on the hill Mizer and the Hermonites? Will He now forsake you? Oh no, He will turn again! He will have compassion upon you, for, “He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.”

And now, Brothers and Sisters, learn the lessons of the whole subject. The first inference is—here is consolation for the house of Israel! The Jews have been chided and God’s anger has smoked against His chosen. But they will be gathered together one day—and the fullness of the Jews shall be brought to the feet of Jesus. Let Israel write this over her synagogues and let believing Jews inscribe this upon their doorposts—“He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.” His dear people, Israel, He has not put away forever, for “where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement? says the Lord.” He will yet bring the seed of Abraham to Himself and comfort them in His bosom.

Let this be a lesson, also, to ministers. We have to chide, sometime, by preaching the Law and the terrors of the wrath to come. But we must not let a sharp tone rule our ministry. Our preaching must be quick and powerful, but as God does not always chide, so neither must we! There is to be the thunder and the lightning, but there must be the soft shower after it—we must not always chide. This is equally a lesson to all of you. If God will not always chide, then you must not. Have you a child who has done wrong? Chide, by all means, but do not always chide! There is the difficulty involved in the example to the rest of the family, but still I pray you forgive, for your Lord says He will not always chide. God is wiser than we are—and if it would be right always to chide, God would have done it—but He acts otherwise.

What the Lord does is a model for us, let us copy it. If He would always chide us where should we be? But He will not. Therefore I beseech you, forgive the wrong, forgive the wrong at once and take your child to your heart. Mark your disapprobation of the offense, kind Christian parent, but still forgive your child! Be angry and sin not—and you can only be so by not being angry too much or too long. Here, too, let us say, do not always find fault. Condemn the fault, mistresses, if there is a wrong in the servant—and speak of it very plainly—but do not be always complaining of your servants, or, as people call it, “nagging at them.” For if you do, they will very soon hate you and all chance of doing them good will be gone. By perpetually finding fault you will make them eye-servers or unhappy employees.

Do not always blame, but praise when it is due. Certain people never praise anybody. They think it will puff them up and spoil them. How many times in a year do I receive the following fatherly advice, “I hope your work will last and I pray that you may be kept humble,” and so on. A good lady once told me that she prayed every day for me, that I might not be proud. I replied, “You put me in mind of my own neglect, for I have never prayed that prayer for you and must begin.” “Oh, no,” she said, “there is no occasion for that, there is no danger of my being proud.” “Then,” I said, “I had better begin at once, for you are proud already.”

These people think a vast deal of themselves if they imagine that a little of their praise would exalt us above measure. I believe that a judicious word of encouragement and commendation is often more useful than censure—and certainly censure has all the more effect when it comes from one who has spoken justly of you on former occasions. Children and servants will not thrive on perpetual chiding any more than a horse on constant whipping. A very good gentleman had a faithful manservant who came to him one day after 10 years’ service and said, “Sir, I must leave you.” “How is that?” the gentleman asked, “have I not treated you well?” “I have no fault to find,” was the answer. “Have not I paid you enough? Do you need more?” “Oh, no, Sir,” he said, “but sometimes, do you know, when we have been traveling together and have roughed it both on sea and land, if you had spoken one kind word to me I would have stuck to you as long as you lived. But you have never spoken to me except when you gave your orders.” Our honest faithful dependents look for encouragement and they ought to have it. The Holy Spirit and the Apostolic

writers speak well of good men and so should we.

The last word concerns God’s dealings with us. That is the chief thought of the text. Let us carry it away with us. He is chiding you, dear Sister. He is chiding you, my Brother, but do not think that it will last forever. “He will not always chide.” The sun went down last night and a little child who had never noticed it before might have cried and said, “Father, Father, the sun is gone away! I saw him go down behind the hills. It is dark! What shall we do?” “Oh,” you say to him, “do not fear, my Baby, he will be up again tomorrow.” Go, then, and tell every broken heart that “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” The Lord may chide today but He will kiss tomorrow! Now the smarting of His rod are terrible—tomorrow the sweetness of His love will be entrancing!

Be of good courage, then! Go to your offended Father speedily and confess the wrong which brought you chastisement. Humble yourself in His sight and He will smile again! Forgive others, and then expect to be forgiven yourself, for verily, verily I say unto you, the time of the opening of the dungeons is come! The night of mourning is almost over! You soon shall rejoice in the Lord!—

*“Come, let us to the Lord our God  
With contrite heart return!  
Our God is gracious, nor will leave  
The desolate to mourn.  
His voice commands the tempest forth,  
And stills the stormy wave;  
And though His arm is strong to smite,  
‘Tis also strong to save.”*

Therefore, be of good courage, all you that hope in the Lord! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 103.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 103 (VERSE 1), 136 (VERSE 1), 211.

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IN THE HAY FIELD  
NO. 757

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 23, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle.”  
Psalm 104:14.**

WE who are condemned to live in this great wilderness of brick are very likely to forget the seasons altogether. And our friends who live out in the green country and see the changing seasons, are quite as apt to hear the voices of the seasons with their ears only, and not to learn the inward meaning with their hearts. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter are God’s four Evangelists whom He sends into this world to teach those who are willing to be taught. But the most of men are far too much intent upon the problem of how they may be fed to care for spiritual instruction.

“He that has ears to hear, let him hear.” As for others, in whom the god of this world is reigning, they will not hear though Heaven, and earth, and Hell should mingle their voices into one great thunder-clap. Just now all the world is busy with ingathering the hay, and you could scarcely ride for a few minutes in the country without enjoying the delicious fragrance of the hay field and hearing the sharpening of the mower’s scythe.

I believe there is a Gospel in the hay field, and that Gospel we intend, this morning, to bring out as we may be enabled. Our text conducts us at once to the spot and we shall therefore need no preface. “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle”—three things we shall notice. First, that grass is, in itself, instructive. Secondly, that grass is far more so when God is seen in it. And thirdly, that by the growth of grass for the cattle, the ways of Divine Grace may be illustrated.

I. First then, “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle.” Here we have something WHICH IS, IN ITSELF, INSTRUCTIVE. There is scarcely any emblem, with the exception of water and light, which you will find more frequently used by inspiration than the grass of the field. In the first place the grass may be instructively looked upon as the symbol of our mortality, “All flesh is grass.”

The whole history of man may be seen in the meadow. He springs up green and tender, subject to the frosts of infancy which imperil his young life. He grows. He comes to maturity. He puts on beauty even as the grass is adorned with flowers and the meadows are bedecked with varied hues. But after awhile his strength departs and his beauty is wrinkled even as the grass withers, and is followed by a fresh generation, which withers in its turn. Like ourselves, the grass ripens but to decay.

The eons of men come to maturity in due time, and then decline and wither as the green herb. Some of the grass is not left to come to ripeness at all, but the mower’s scythe suddenly removes it, even as swift-footed Death overtakes the careless children of Adam. “In the morning it flourishes and grows up. In the evening it is cut down and withers. For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.” “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

This is very humbling for us to remember, but we need frequently to be reminded of it, or we dream of immortality beneath the stars. We are and we are not! We are not substance but shadow! Our years are as a shadow which declines and, as for our age, it is gone as a weaver’s shuttle. We pass away like the swift ships. We fly as the eagle. We burst as the bubble. We sink back into the wave of time that bears us as the foam dissolves into the sea—

*“Great God, how infinite are You!  
What worthless worms are we!”*

We ought never to tread upon the grass without remembering that whereas the green sod covers our graves, it also reminds us of them. And it preaches, with every blade it has, a sermon to us concerning our mortality of which the text is, “all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.” In the second place, grass is frequently used in Scripture as an emblem of the wicked. David tells us from his own experience that the heart of a righteous man is apt to grow envious of the wicked when he sees the prosperity of the ungodly.

We have seen them spreading themselves like green bay trees, and apparently fixed and rooted in their places. And when we have smarted under our own troubles, and felt that all the day long we were scourged, and chastened every morning, we have been apt to say, “How is this just? How can this be consistent with the moral government of God?” But we are reminded that in a short time we shall pass by the place of the wicked, and lo, it shall not be. We shall diligently consider his place, and lo, it shall not be, for he is soon cut down as the grass, and withers as the green herb. The grass withers, the flower fades away, and even so shall pass away forever the glory and excellence of those who build upon the estate of time, and dig for lasting comfort in the mines of earth.

It is true the kings of the earth are most often on the side of evil, and the great ones with their pompous State are usually against the Most High. But let not God’s people mourn, though waters of a full cup be wrung out of them, for the portion of the wicked is not forever. They shall have their day and then shall come their endless night. They are set in lofty places, but they also stand in slippery places. They shall be brought to destruction as in a moment. “As a dream when one awakes, so, O Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.”

O, you who know not the Lord, and rest not in the atonement of the Lord Jesus, see to what an end you shall come—your end shall be the oven! As the Eastern farmer gathers up the green herb and despite its former beauty, casts it into the furnace, such must be your lot, O vainglorious Sinners! Thus will the Judge command His angels, “Bind them up in bundles to burn.” Where, now, is your merriment? Where, now, is your confidence? Where, now, is your pride and your pomp? Where, now, your boasts and your loud-mouthed blasphemies? They are silenced forever, for, as the thorns crackle under the pot but are speedily consumed and leave nothing but a handful of white ashes, so shall it be with the wicked! They shall pass away in the fire of God’s wrath, and the flames shall utterly consume them.

It is more pleasing to remember that the grass is used in Scripture as a picture of the elect of God. The wicked are comparable to the dragons of the wilderness, but God’s own people shall spring up in their place, for it is written, “In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.” The desert of sin shall yet be verdant with Divine Grace. The elect are compared to grass because of their number as they shall be in the latter days and because of the of their rapid growth.

You remember the passage, “There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.” O that the long expected day might soon come, when God’s people should no longer be a little flock, but when a multitude shall come to Christ and the Redeemer shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! It is said of Zion’s children, “They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses”—two of the fastest growing things we know of—so shall a nation be born in a day!

So shall crowds be converted at once, for when the Spirit of God shall be mightily at work in the midst of the Church, men shall fly unto Christ as doves fly to their windows, so that the astonished Church shall cry, “These, where had they been?” O that we might live to see the age of gold—the time which Prophets have foretold and longed for—when the company of God’s people shall be as innumerable as the blades of grass in the meadows! Then Grace and Truth shall flourish where once everything was barrenness.

How like the grass are God’s people for this reason, that they are absolutely dependent upon the influences of Heaven! Our fields are parched if vernal showers and gentle dews are withheld—and what are our souls without the gracious visitations of the Spirit? Sometimes through severe trials our wounded hearts are like the mown grass, and then we have the promise, “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.” Our sharp troubles have taken away our beauty, and lo, the Lord visits us, and we revive again!

Thank God for that old saying which is a gracious doctrine as well as a true proverb, “Each blade of grass has its own drop of dew.” God is pleased to give His own peculiar mercies to each one of His own people. “Your blessing is upon Your people.” The river of God, which is full of water, waters the Church which is a vineyard in which every vine is so dependent upon God that He must be its heavenly dew, or it will dry up at once. As you look at the fields of grass, think of them as being comparable to the great company of the redeemed whom God shall make to grow upon the face of the earth!

Once again, grass is comparable to the food with which the Lord supplies the necessities of His chosen ones. Take the 23rd Psalm and you have the metaphor worked out in the sweetest form of pastoral song. “He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters.” Just as the sheep has nourishment according to its nature, and this nourishment is abundantly found for it by its shepherd so that it not only feeds, but then lies down in the midst of the fodder, satiated with plenty, and perfectly content and at ease—even so are the people of God when Jesus Christ leads them into the pastures of the Covenant, and opens up to them the precious Truths of God upon which their souls shall be fed.

Beloved, have we not proven that promise true in this House of Prayer? “In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined”? Why, my soul has sometimes fed upon Christ till I have felt as if I could receive no more, and then I have laid down in the bounty of my God to take my rest, satisfied with favor, and full of the goodness of the Lord.

Whenever you see the sheep at noontide, resting in the rich herbage beneath the spreading oak, think of that enquiry of Solomon when he said, “Tell me where you feed, where you make your flock to rest at noon.” And when you see the herds with all their needs supplied both in summer and in winter, then sing with the Psalmist, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” Thus you see the grass, itself, is not without instruction for those who will incline their ear. It is a memorial of our mortality, and of the passing away of the wicked. It is a picture of the elect of God when watered with the dew of Heaven, and an emblem of the spiritual meat with which God will satisfy the sheep of His pasture.

II. In the second place, GOD IS SEEN IN THE GROWING OF THE GRASS. He is seen, first, as a Worker, “He causes the grass to grow.” He is seen secondly as a Caretaker, He causes the grass to grow for the cattle.

1. First, as a Worker, God is to be seen in every blade of grass if we have but eyes to discern Him. A blind world this, which always talks about “natural laws,” and “the effects of natural causes,” but forgets that laws cannot operate of themselves, and that natural causes, so called, are not causes at all unless the First Cause shall set them in motion. The old Romans used to say, God thundered, God rained. We say, it thunders, it rains. What “it”? All those expressions are subterfuges to escape from the thought of God.

We commonly say, “How wonderful are the works of nature!” What is “nature”? Do you know what nature is? I remember a lecturer in the street, an infidel, speaking about nature, and he was asked by a Christian man standing by whether he would tell him what nature was. “Walk in the fields, and see nature”—“nature did this and nature did that”—these are common phrases but is there any meaning in them? Is not that an old heathen way of talking?

If we see aright, we see God working everywhere. We frequently talk as if we were trying to thrust our God into the distance. Our good old forefathers, the Puritans, when they wanted rain, used to pray that God would unstop the bottles of Heaven. At another time that He would be pleased to bind up the clouds, that there might not be too much rain. We run to the barometer, or grumble at the bad weather. They referred all natural phenomena to the Most High and were accustomed to see Him at work in all the events of life.

We have grown so wise nowadays that we find a thousand second causes interposing between the world and its Maker. Unhappy is the wisdom whose boasted discoveries would gladly push us away from our heavenly Father into a wild sea of laws and second causes. To my mind it would be even better if we could get back to the untutored mind of the Indian who sees God in every cloud and hears Him in the wind. We

 need our God—we are like orphans without Him—and it is well to be reminded, in the simple language of the text, that He is very near us, for He makes the grass to grow for the cattle.

The simple production of grass is not the result of natural law apart from the actual work of God. Mere law would be inoperative unless the great Master Himself sent a thrill of power through the matter which is regulated by the law—unless, like the steam engine which puts force into all the spinning-jennies and wheels of a cotton-mill—God Himself were the motive power to make every wheel revolve. How I could fall down and find rest on the grass as on a royal couch, now that I know that my God is there at work for His creatures!

Having asked you to see God as a Worker, I want you to make use of this—therefore I bid you see God in common things. He makes the grass to grow—grass is a common thing. You see it every day everywhere, yet there is God in it. Dissect it and pull it to pieces. There are the attributes of God illustrated in every single flower of the field, and in every green leaf. Come, my Friends, see God in your common matters, your daily afflictions, your common joys, your everyday mercies. Do not say, “I must see a miracle before I see God.” In truth, everything is a miracle, everything wonderful, everything teeming with marvel.

See God in the bread upon the table and the water in your cup. It will be the happiest way of living if you can say in each Providential circumstance, “My Father has done all this.” See Him in common things, I say, and see Him in little things. The little things of life are the greatest troubles. A man will bear that his house is burned down more quietly than he will bear to see an ill-cooked piece of meat upon his table—when he reckoned upon its being done to a turn. It is the little stone which gets into the shoe and makes the pilgrim limp. Oh, but to see God in little things, to believe that there is as much the Presence of God in a sere leaf falling from the elm as in the avalanche which crushes a village!

O, to believe that the guidance of every drop of spray, when the wave breaks on the rock, is as much under the hand of God as the guidance of the mightiest planet when steered in its courses! To see God in the little as well as in the great is true wisdom! Think, too, of God working in the solitary things, for the grass does not merely grow around our populous cities, and where men take care of it, but up there on the side of the bleak Alps where no traveler has ever passed! Where only the eyes of the wild bird has beheld their lovely verdure, the moss and the grass come to perfection and display all their beauty, for God’s works are fair to other eyes than those of mortals.

And you, solitary child of God, dwelling far away from any friend, unknown and obscure in a remote hamlet. Or you in the midst of London, hiding away in your little attic, unknown to fame, and forsaken by friendship—you are not forgotten by the love of Heaven. He makes the grass to grow all alone, and shall not He make you flourish in loneliness? He can bring forth your graces and educate you for the skies in solitude and neglect. The grass, you know, is a thing we tread upon—nobody thinks of grass—men pass over it and have no compassion for the stems which bend beneath their weight, and yet God makes it grow.

Perhaps you are oppressed and down-trodden, but let not this depress your spirit, for God executes righteousness for all those that are oppressed. He makes the grass to grow, and He can make your heart to flourish under all the oppressions and afflictions of life so that you shall still be happy and holy though all the world marches over you—still living in the immortal life which God Himself bestows upon you though Hell itself set its heel upon you! Poor and needy one, unknown, unobserved, oppressed and down-trodden, God makes the grass to grow and He will take care of you.

As I turned over this text in my mind, to catch the various gleams of light which glance from it as from a prism, I thought, “How many are those blades of grass!” Set a child to count them, even in one acre, and how long the task will occupy—and yet each one of those blades God makes to grow as much as if there were not another in all the field! So with all the myriads of God’s people—He preserves each child as if He had no other.

He loves as much every single one of all the blood-bought seed as if it were the only object of Divine Grace, the only one that should sing within the pearly gates. Be of good comfort, then—the God who abounds in mercy towards the grass of the field will not forget you.

2. But I said we should see in the text God also as a great Caretaker. “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle.” Does God, then, care for oxen, or does He say it altogether for our sakes? “You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn,” shows that God has a care for the beasts of the field. But it shows much more than that, namely, that He would have those who work for Him fed as they work. God cares for the beasts, and makes grass to grow for them. Then, my Soul, though sometimes you have said with David, “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You,” yet God cares for you.

Do you remember our sermon upon “The Ravens’ Cry”? [Volume 12, #672.] “He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry”—there you have an instance of His care for birds, and here we have His care for beasts. And though you, my Hearer, may seem to yourself to be as black and defiled as a raven, and as far from anything spiritually good as the beasts, yet take comfort from this text! He gives to beasts their food, and He will give to you, though you think yourself to be beast-like, what your spirit needs at His hands. Observe, He cares for these beasts who are helpless in caring for themselves. The cattle could not plant the grass, nor cause it to grow.

Though they can do nothing in the matter, yet He does it all for them. He causes the grass to grow. You who are as helpless as oxen to help yourselves, who can only stand and moan out your misery, and know not what to do—God can prevent you in His loving kindness, and favor you in His tenderness. Now let the bleating of your prayer go up to Heaven! Let the moans of your desires go up to Him, poor guilty ones, and help shall come to you though you cannot help yourselves.

We generally say beasts are dumb and speechless things, yet God makes the grass grow for them. Will He hear those that cannot speak, and will He not hear those who can? The beasts shed no tears of penitence and pour forth no sobs and sighs of fervent prayer, and yet their needs are supplied! Will God let that poor young man yonder continue month after month seeking Him, and will He not be found of him? Shall that poor woman’s briny tears all fall in vain, that poor broken heart cry out in bitterness, and meet with no response?

Shall the Lord of Mercy answer the beasts, and not hear men who are made in His own image? Since our God views, with kind consideration, the cattle in the field, He will surely have compassion upon His own sons and daughters when they desire to seek His face. How often the cattle are oppressed by man! I am sure it is painful to see them driven through these streets, bruised and faint, with their poor tongues hanging out of their thirsty mouths. I wish the authorities would provide suitable drinking troughs for them, for at present their sufferings are a disgrace to our city.

It is frequently so sickening a sight to see poor tortured cattle in our thoroughfares, that it makes one long to fly from such brutality, and cry*— “Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless mass of shade,  
Where sights of cruel men and maddened beasts Might never reach us more.”*

Yet the great God looks after those poor dumb cattle whom men despise! Comfortable thought for some of you who are of the meekest and lowliest spirit. You despise yourselves, and others despise you, but He who causes the grass to grow for the cattle has an eye to you! Man may have nothing for you but strokes from the rod. Thoughtless, heartless man may goad and vex your spirit and drive you through the streets of this busy world without so much as a drop of comfort to cool your burning tongue and fevered brain when you are fainting with many cares and fears. But God thinks of you, God cares for you still.

When your father and your mother forsake you, then the Lord will take you up. The cattle, forlorn as they are, have God to think of them and so have you. Shall they be silently trustful, and will you be noisily complaining? There is this also to be said—God not only thinks of the cattle, taking care of them—but the food which He provides for them is fit food! He causes grass to grow for the cattle, just the sort of food which ruminants require. Even thus the Lord God provides fit sustenance for His people. Depend upon Him by faith and wait upon Him in prayer—and you shall have food convenient for you.

You shall find in God’s mercy just that which your nature desires, suitable supplies for your grievous needs. This convenient food the Lord takes care to reserve for the cattle, for no one eats the cattle’s food but the cattle. There is grass for them and nobody else cares for it, and thus it is kept for them. Even so, God has a special food for His own people—He knows how to preserve it, too, and keep it for them and them only. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.”

Though the grass is free to all men who choose to eat it, yet no creature cares for it except the cattle for whom it is prepared. And though the Grace of God is free to all men, yet no man cares for it except the elect of God for whom He prepared it, and whom He prepares to receive it. There is as much reserve of the grass for the cattle as if there were walls around it—no one else eats it—no one else cares for it. And so, though the Grace of God is free, and there is no bound set round about it, yet it is as much reserved as if it were restricted—and none might receive it but the elect of God.

God is seen in the grass as the Worker and the Caretaker. Then let us see His hand in Providence at all times. Let us see it and lean upon it, not only when we have abundance, but even when we have none, for the grass is preparing for the cattle even in the depth of winter. God is preparing and breaking the soil. He is sending the juices into the roots, giving the roots a little rest that they may afterwards bring forth abundance. And you, you sons of sorrow, in your trials and troubles, are still cared for by God. He has an end to serve in all your griefs and miseries. He will accomplish His own Divinely gracious purpose in you—only be still and see the salvation of God! Every winter’s night has a direct connection with the joyous days of mowing and reaping, and each time of grief is linked to future joy.

II. Our third head is most interesting. GOD’S WORKING IN THE GRASS FOR THE CATTLE GIVES US ILLUSTRATIONS CONCERNING DIVINE GRACE. I ask every Christian here to give me his earnest attention for a few minutes, and I think he may hear something which may cheer him. I will suppose that I am soliloquizing, and I will say to myself as I read the text, “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle. Here I perceive a satisfying provision for that form of creature.

“Now, am also a creature, but I am a nobler creature than the cattle! I cannot imagine, for a moment, that God will provide all that the cattle needs and not provide for me. But naturally I feel uneasy. I cannot find in this world what I want—if I were to win all its riches I should still be discontented—and when I have all that heart could wish of time’s treasures, yet still my heart feels as if it were empty. There must be somewhere or other something that will satisfy me as a man with an immortal soul.

“God altogether satisfies the ox. He must, therefore, have something or other that would altogether satisfy me if I could get it! There is the grass— the cattle get it—and when they have eaten their share, they lie down and seem perfectly contented. Now, all I have ever found, as an unconverted man, has never satisfied me so that I could lie down and be content. There must be, then, something somewhere that would content me if I could get at it.”

Is not that good reasoning? I ask both the Christian and the unbeliever to go with me so far. But then let us proceed another step: “The cattle do get what they need—not only is the grass provided, but they get it. Well, then, why should not I obtain what I need? I find my soul hungering and thirsting after something more than I can see with my eyes or hear with my ears. There must be something to satisfy my soul—why should not I find it? The cattle find that which satisfies them—why should I not obtain what would satisfy me? There must be such a thing. I cannot suppose that my heavenly Father made me as a creature without making something, also, that could satisfy my largest desires. There is such a thing, and surely if the cattle get what they need, I shall not be left unsupplied.”

Then, I begin to ask in prayer, “What is this which You, O God, have provided to satisfy my soul?” And while I am praying, I also meditate and think, “Well, God has given to the cattle something which is consonant to their nature—they are nothing but flesh, and flesh is grass—there is therefore grass for their flesh. But, then, though I am flesh, I am something else besides, I am spirit. Then, if I am to get something to satisfy me, it must be spiritual—a spiritual meat. Where is it?”

When I turn to God’s Word, I find there that though the grass withers, the Word of the Lord endures forever, and the Word which God speaks unto us is spirit and life. “Oh, then,” I say, “here is something spiritual for my spiritual nature, something suitable to me as an immortal being.” O may God help me to know what that spiritual meat is and enable me to lay hold upon it, for I perceive that though God provides the grass for the cattle, the cattle must eat it themselves. They are not fed if they lie down and refuse to come and eat!

Then what must I do? Must I imitate the cattle and eat that which God provides for me? What do I find provided in Scripture? I find the Lord Jesus Christ laid down as the Food of my soul. I am told that He came into this world to suffer, and bleed, and die instead of me, and that if I trust in Him I shall be saved. And being saved, the thoughts of His love will give solace and joy to me and be my strength, the strength of my life and my portion forever. I do not find the cattle bringing any purchase money to the pasture, but they enter it and receive their portion—they open their mouths and receive what they need.

Even so do I, by an act of faith in Jesus. Lord, give me Grace to feed upon Christ! Make me hunger and thirst after Him! Give me the faith by which I may be a receiver of Him, so that I may be satisfied with favor, and full of the goodness of the Lord. I think my text, though it looked small, begins to grow and swell as we meditate upon it!

Now, I want to introduce you to a few more thoughts on this matter as illustrations of Divine Grace. Preventing Grace may here be seen in a symbol. Before the cattle were made, in this world there was grass. We find in the first chapter of Genesis God provided the grass before He created the cattle. And what a mercy that there were Covenant supplies for God’s people before they were in the world! He had given His Son Jesus Christ to die, to be the Sponsor and Surety of the elect, before Adam was made in the garden. Long before sin came into the world, the everlasting mercy of God foresaw the damages of sin and provided a Refuge for every elect soul.

Oh, what a mercy it is for me, that, before I hunger, God has prepared for my hunger! That before I thirst, God has opened the rock in the wilderness to leap forth with crystal streams to satisfy the thirst of my soul! See what Sovereign Grace can do! Before the cattle come to the pasture, the grass is grown for them, and before I feel my need of Divine mercy, that mercy is provided for me! Then I perceive an illustration of Free Grace, for wherever the ox comes into the field, he brings no money with him. There is the food ready for him, but he brings nothing with which to purchase it.

So I, poor needy sinner, having nothing, come and receive Christ without money and without price. He makes the grass to grow for the cattle, and so He does provide Grace for my needy soul, though I have now no money, no virtue, no excellence of my own! And why is it, my Friends, why is it that God gives the cattle the grass? You will perhaps be surprised when I say to you that the reason is because they belong to Him. Here is a text to prove it. “The silver and the gold are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” That is why He provides grass for them—because they are His own property.

How is it that Christ is provided for God’s people? Because “the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” Of every herd of cattle in the world, God could say, “They are Mine.” Long before the farmer put his brand, God had set His creating mark upon it. They are God’s making, preserving, and feeding altogether. So, before the stamp of Adam’s Fall was set upon our brow, the stamp of electing love was set there. “In Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

Another thing may, perhaps, surprise you still more! God feeds the cattle because He has entered into a Covenant with them to do so. “What? A covenant with cattle!” says somebody. Yes! Truly so, for when God spoke to His servant Noah, in that day when all the cattle came out of the ark, we find Him saying, “I establish My Covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you.” So there was a Covenant, you see, made with the cattle, and that Covenant was that seedtime and harvest should not fail. Therefore the earth brings forth for them, and the Lord causes the grass to grow.

Does Jehovah keep His Covenant with cattle, and will He not keep His Covenant with His own beloved? Ah, it is because His chosen people are His covenanted ones in the Person of the Lord Jesus that He provides for them all that they shall need in time and in eternity, and satisfies them out of the fullness of His everlasting love! Once, again, God feeds the cattle and then the cattle praise Him. We find David saying in the 148th Psalm, “Praise the Lord...you beasts and all cattle.” They have their music for God! The Lord feeds His people in order that they may praise Him, to the end that their glory may sing praise unto Him and not be silent. While other creatures give glory to God, let the redeemed of the Lord especially say so, whom He has delivered out of the hand of the enemy.

Nor even yet is our text quite exhausted. Turning one moment from the cattle, I want you to notice the grass. It is said of the grass, “He causes the grass to grow”—here is a mighty blow to free will, because if the grass does not grow without God’s causing it to grow, how is it that Divine Grace should be found in the human heart apart from Divine operations? Surely Grace is a much more wonderful product of Divine wisdom and more complicated than the grass can be! And if Grace does not grow without a Divine cause, depend upon it, Grace does not dwell in us without a Divine implantation! And if I have so much as one blade of Grace growing within me, I must trace it all to God’s Divine will.

As the grass all depends upon God’s causing it to grow, so the Divine Grace we have depends upon God’s constant kindness and tender loving mercy to make it ripen to perfection. You are a babe as yet in Grace, and that you are alive unto God at all is due to God’s quickening power. But if ever you are to attain to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, that must be due to the continuous putting forth of the Divine energy. There is no

 having Grace, and no growing in Grace except God gives us both the one and the other—for if He causes grass to grow, much more must Grace come from Him.

Again, if God thinks it worth His while to make grass, and take care of it, and make it grow, much more will He think it to His honor to cause His Grace to grow in my heart. If the great invisible Spirit, whose thoughts are high and lofty, condescends to look after that humble thing which grows by the hedge, surely He will condescend to watch over His own nature which He calls the incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever! Mungo Park, in the deserts of Africa, was much comforted when he took up a little piece of moss and saw the wisdom and power of God in that lonely piece of verdant loveliness.

So when I introduce you today to the fields ripe and ready for the mower, how your hearts ought to leap for joy to see how God has produced the grass, caring for it all through the weary months of the longdelayed spring—and the rigorous cold of a suddenly perpetuated winter— until, at last, He sent the genial rain and sunshine, and brought the fields to their proper condition. And so, my Soul, though you may have many a frost and biting winter, and much to bear with, yet He causes the grass to grow, and He will cause you to grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Once again, you perceive that the grass does not grow without an object—the grass grows for the cattle. And then you know what the cattle grow for—they grow for man! So the whole business comes to a point. But, then, what does man grow for? That is the next question. Then, my Soul, if there is any good thing growing in you, it is for a purpose—and you, yourself, if you are favored with Divine manifestation, are blessed for a purpose! And as the grass does not refuse to be fed upon by the cattle, take care that you do not refuse to yield yourself unto God!

And as the cattle do not refuse to give themselves up to labor and slaughter, so bow yourself and render yourself to God, for God has an end in sparing and blessing you, and preserving you, and strewing your path with kindnesses. Take care that you do not miss this end, for to gain it will be your happiness as well as God’s glory. It should be your chief end on earth to serve Him, and to glorify Him forever above. I draw to a close when I have noticed that the existence of the grass is necessary to complete the chain of nature.

There would be no cattle if there were no grass—and no cattle, no something else—so the whole chain would go to pieces. So the meanest child of God is necessary to the family. They in Heaven without us cannot be made perfect—the little ones are as necessary to God’s family as the great ones. The Lord cannot, will not, put you away from it, my desponding Friends, because, though you cannot see it, you are one stone in the building. And if you are taken away, what becomes of the next, and the next? Perhaps every heir of Heaven is necessary to complete the purpose of God. I said “perhaps,” but we know it to be so, for we are told by Paul that we are the fullness of Christ.

The church is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. Nature would be incomplete without the trembling grass blade, and the economy of Divine Grace would be incomplete without you, Mr. Fearing, and you, Mrs. Much-Afraid. You are necessary to complete the Divine purpose—in order to let it be seen, world without end, that God is not defeated—that since Christ loved His own, He loved them to the end. And so He can say, “Of all which He has given Me, I have lost nothing.”

Oh, how blessed it is to think of this! Since we are all thus necessary, if saved by Grace, let us begin this morning to bless and to praise the God of Providence and Grace! While the grass, with its verdure, serves God by beautifying the earth. And while the cattle take their turn, also, in the economy of creation, let each Christian say to himself, “Lord, what would You have me do?” And having found it, whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might.

The Lord bless these remarks to you, and make them profitable to your souls for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.  
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THE CEDARS OF LEBANON  
NO. 529

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The trees of the Lord are full of sap. The cedars of Lebanon, which He has planted.”  
Psalm 104:16.**

IF Solomon were here this morning, who spoke of all trees, from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar that is in Lebanon, he would greatly instruct us in the natural history of the cedar and, at the same time, uttering allegories and proverbs of wisdom, he would give us apples of gold in baskets of silver. But since the Lord Jesus Christ has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,” we can dispense with the company of Solomon. For if Christ is present, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Solomon probably would confine his remarks simply to the physical conformation and botany of the wonderful tree. But our Lord, I trust, will speak to our hearts this morning concerning those who are “planted in the courts of the Lord,” and therefore flourish like cedars. May our communications this morn be blessed to us while we talk of those trees of the Lord, those plants of His own right hand planting which grow in the garden of the Lord.

I shall have to say some things this morning which are not for beginners in the Gospel school. I shall have to handle some lofty matters which belong to the more advanced of the Lord’s family. For Lebanon is a high hill and the ascent is very craggy. The pathway to the summit is not for the feet of babes—it is rather fit for those lion-like men, those men of experience—who, by reason of use, have had their feet made like hind’s feet that they may stand on the high places. Follow me as I may be led of the Spirit to climb that arduous pathway. Let us stand this morning under the venerable shadow of those ancient cedars which, to this very day, are the Lord’s witnesses and are as before, full of sap—the cedars of Lebanon, which the Lord has planted.

There are three things I shall bring before your attention this morning, in the cedars of Lebanon. First of all, the absence of all human cultivation. Secondly, the presence of Divine care. And thirdly, the fullness of vital principle.

You may not see all this at first, but remember that our translation is not exactly correct. You will observe that the word “sap,” is inserted in italics—it is not there in the Hebrew. “The trees of the Lord are full,” or rather, which gives the meaning clearly, “The trees of the Lord are satiated—are satisfied—the cedars of Lebanon, which He has planted.”

I. That rendering of the text gives me my first point. We see in yonder venerable trees, crowning the ridge of the Lebanese range, THE ABSENCE OF ALL HUMAN CULTIVATION.  
1. Note first, that these trees are peculiarly the Lord’s trees, because

they owe their planting entirely to Him . “The cedars of Lebanon, which He has planted.” No diligent hands dug the soil, no careful farmer dropped in the fruitful cone. How those ancient giants of the grove came there, no tongue can tell. It must be left among the mysteries. Perhaps the waters of the tremendous deluge washed up the cones and laid them safely upon the ledge of rock at the top of the hill, and there they sprouted and grew. That would be but a guess. We must leave the early planting of those mighty trees among the secrets which belong unto God. Certain it is that they owe nothing to men, that there is not a tree of Lebanon of which we may not safely say, “This is one of the cedars which the Lord has planted.”

Beloved, it is quite true of every child of God. The Lord uses instrumentality, but the instrument has no real power except as God puts power into it. If we have been converted, we were not converted of ourselves, of the energy of our own free will. We are not self-planted, but God-planted. If we have been turned from nature’s darkness to marvelous light, it was not through the oratory or eloquence of the minister. If so, our religion would be in vain. It was God whose fiat said, “Let the light be,” and light was.

It was He who said, “Let that dried branch be planted in My garden,” and planted we were—and grow we must—and shall, while He supports us. The mysterious finger of the Divine Spirit dropped the living seed into a heart which He had Himself prepared for its reception. And there it sprang up and continued to grow from the tender shoot until it towered aloft as a goodly cedar of mighty girth. Every true heir of Heaven, like the cedar, owns the Great Farmer as His planter.

2. As I look upon those noble trees, I note that they are not dependant upon man for their watering. Yonder trees in the plain are fertilized by little canals running at their roots, and therefore are they green. But these on the top of Lebanon, who shall find a stream for them? Who shall bring the rivers of water to their feet? How shall the gardener empty his bucket, that they may drink? No, there they stand on the lofty rock, not moistened by human irrigation. And yet your heavenly Father supplies them. The clouds, those wandering cisterns of the sky, arrested by their branches, hover round them and at last pour down in deluges the fructifying rain.

Or the ledges of the rock retain the streamlets which trickle from Lebanon’s snowy peaks and then the roots of the cedar drink up the nourishment which they require. But man has nothing to do with it. Man’s cultivation withers in the plain below. When autumn comes, the fields are all dry and parched. Man only preserves to himself a little spot of green by perpetually using the processes of irrigation, but these cedars owe not a single drop to the power and energy of man. Well, now, so is it to the Christian who has learned to live by faith. He can say—

*“My trust is in the Lord alone,  
My rock and refuge in His Throne;  
In all my fears, in all my straits,  
My soul on His salvation waits.”*

He is independent of man, even in temporal things, because he has learned to trust in his God. He believes the promise—“Your bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure.” And the bread and the water are sure to him in spirituals. Though he uses the means, though he loves the pastor after God’s own heart, though he loves the pastures where he feeds and is made to lie down. Yet still he sings, The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I shall not want. He leads me beside the still waters, He makes me to lie down in green pastures.” On no priest does he rely, on no persuasions of eloquent tongues does he depend. For his full and his continued maintenance he looks to the Lord his God and to Him alone. The dew of Heaven is his portion and the God of Heaven is his Fountain. Every Christian, thus, is a tree of the Lord, in His planting and in His watering.

3. Furthermore, if your eyes look attentively at yonder cedars, you will see that no mortal might protects them. They are planted on a mountain ridge no less than six thousand feet above the level of the sea. The snow frequently lies upon their branches in enormous masses. They are in the most exposed position conceivable. When the cedars were as yet but young, the browsing goat might have destroyed them. As they grew up, the heavy falls of snow must have completely buried the young trees.

Afterward they were subjected to many dangers. Up there the lightning is at home. There the callow tempests try their young wings. Lebanon’s towering peaks must be a frequent mark for the thunderbolts of God and sometimes when the time has come, the voice of the Lord, that makes the hinds to calve, also rends the cedars of Lebanon and the hoary prince of the forest bows humbly at the touch of the scepter of his King. These trees owe nothing—for their preservation from storm, wind and tempest—to man. There is no hedge set about them. There are no means used to shore up the limbs as they begin to drop by weight—man does not even keep the goat from them. They are left there unprotected in the pitiless storm and terrible blast, and yet the veterans survive. The cedars of Lebanon have not all fallen even beneath the insatiable axe of man—still they stand— God’s trees, kept and preserved by Him and by Him alone.

It is precisely the same with the Christian. He is not a hot-house plant, sheltered from temptation. He does not live in a world of holy and hallowed influence, preserving him from sin. He stands in the most exposed position, on yonder bare rock, where winds of mysterious Satanic influence and dreadful earthquakes of his own doubts and fears daily try him. Where terrific thunderbolts from God’s right hand, the thunderbolts of desertion and stern affliction all come against him. He has no shelter, no protection, except this—that the broad wings of the Eternal God always cover the cedars which he himself has planted.

Oh, it is magnificent to think how the Christian bears up! Weak, feeble, less than nothing in himself, yet so mighty that all Hell cannot crush him and the united hosts of the world, the flesh and the devil, cannot prevail against him. Methinks I hear the cedars, as the trees of the woods clap their hands, shouting aloud—“In all these things we are more than conquerors,” as they remember lightning and snow and storm. And so with the cedars of the Lord, when tribulation and trial and distress come upon them—“We are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us.” Brethren, forget not that our refuge is in the Lord alone.

4. Fourthly, as to their inspection—they also preserve a sublime indifference to human gaze. Perhaps for thousands of years they may not have been looked upon by human eyes at all. Moses desired to see “that goodly

land and Lebanon.” David often saw them and he sang of that handful of corn whose fruit shall shake like Lebanon. But I cannot find that the cedars have become a whit more green now that they are visited by pilgrims, nor, on the other hand, that they lose anything of their verdure because the evil eyes of man may have glanced upon them.

Solomon spoke of one who was “excellent as the cedars.” Sacred to God, they stand high up in lonely grandeur, indifferent to mortal judgment. When the virgin snows of Lebanon were untouched by man’s polluted foot, and the Eternal walked in tempest, stepping from crag to crag. Or when in the cool eventide the Unseen One trod their hallowed aisles, these trees were God’s trees and God’s trees alone, stretching out their broad branches for Him to gaze upon. They were quite content if at high noon, or in the deep gloom of midnight, the Great Planter in solitary glory looked down upon them.

It is just so with the Christian. He stands, like the cedars, in a conspicuous position, but he courts not observation. He is like a city set upon a hill, yet still consciously he walks before the Lord in the land of the living. He owes nothing to the smiles of men, and he cares as little for their frowns. I mean that true Believer who has so grown in faith that he no longer leans upon an arm of flesh, but understands how to stand upright. I mean that advanced Christian who has not one foot upon the sea and the other on the land, but has put both his feet on the Rock of Ages and lets earth reel if it will, and bids the storms come and the winds blow, unmoved, possessing a deep calm within, because he looks to God. This is his joy and his only joy, “You, God see me, my Father who is in Heaven knows my needs, He looks upon me and regards me.”

Out with the piety which depends upon the public eye! Away, away, away with the religion that needs to be watched and guarded lest it desert the standard. I am not to have religion like a dog collar, which I may slip off and on and feel glad to be rid of it. It must be part and parcel of my being. My religion must be a thing which lives in the notice of God, in my closet, and in my secret heart. Mine must be a religion which I bring into public because I cannot leave it behind. It must not be the Pharisees’ paint and tinsel which he puts on in the public place and privately laughs at when he gets alone.

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, we want to be like the cedars, caring only for God, minding little whether we are praised or blamed by any of human shape. If you cannot feel it sufficient honor to be known of Him who sees in secret, you have need to begin to live aright.

5. Nor have we finished here the glorious independence of the cedar. I would I had a tongue to tell it all out, it is a theme for poet or bard. We want a Coleridge or a Milton to sing the majesty of those grand old trees in their solitary glory. Note that their exultation is all for God and not for man. When the fig tree yields its figs, it may well say, “Thanks to the cultivator who has taken so much care of me.” When the vine gives up her luscious clusters she has to thank the vinedresser who has used the pruning knife. When you walk your gardens, all your plants praise you as well as God, because of your care for them.  
But what say the cedars? Who has planted the cedars, or who has watered them? Who has pruned them—who has hedged them about and kept them in the day of storm? The Lord, even the Lord, alone, has been everything unto the cedars and, therefore, David very sweetly puts it in one of the last Psalms, “Praise you the Lord, fruitful trees and all cedars.” The cedars have not a green leaf to magnify man with, nor a single cone with which to make him proud. The cedar’s silent song is, “Let Jehovah, God of Israel, be praised and when we fall, let our split timbers build a temple to His praise, for unto Him and unto Him alone we grow.”

They fell, you know, many of them, beneath the axe of Hiram and floated on the sea to Joppa. And then again were carried to Jerusalem. But it was that they might make the holy place and build the pillars of the temple of God. So, Christians, is it with you. There is nothing in you that can magnify man. If you understand yourselves aright you give unto the Lord glory and strength, for your only thanks are due to Him. Your praise, your gratitude shall ascend to Him who chose you before ever the earth was. To Him who bought you with His precious blood. To Him who quickens and preserves you by His Spirit. And when you die, this is your hope and joy—that you shall be pillars in the temple of your God and go no more out forever. You are the Lord’s trees from first to last. If you know yourselves aright, the Author and Finisher of your Faith is your Divine Redeemer.

6. I do not know that there is a cedar upon Lebanon which is not also independent of man in its expectations. They never expect to be fenced about and hedged. They never reckon upon being preserved and watered by man. We have many schemes, but I have heard of none for preserving the cedars. Speculations are rife every day and one would scarcely be astonished by a projected railroad to the moon. But yet I have never heard of anyone who has attempted to purchase the cedars of Lebanon, to preserve them, or make them his private property.

Arabs and Turks do their best to ruin the whole grove, but yet there they stand, expecting as little from man as they have ever received from him, giving him their shadow, yielding him their fragrance, but getting nothing and expecting nothing from him in return. That is your example, O Christian. You are to live expecting nothing from man and you shall never be disappointed. You are to live looking upon the Lord alone and there again disappointment shall never come. You are to understand that one of God’s objects with you is to knock away every prop from you, to take away every buttress and to make you lean upon God alone.

There is the round world, what bears it up? He hangs the world upon nothing. If you are what you should be you are just like that earth—you have no visible support—there is nothing upon which you can depend that the carnal eye can see. But yet as the earth moves not and falls not from her orbit, so you, by the power of faith, shall be maintained and kept just where you are. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that wait on the Lord shall not want any good thing.” It is a life’s work to learn independence of the creature and almost another life’s work to learn dependence upon the Creator.

To wean us from the breasts of this world is a long and painful process. To get us clean rid of that walking by sight, which is the disease of man, and to bring us to walk by faith in the Spirit, which is the glory of a Christian—this is a work well worthy of a God—and blessed is the man who has this work to a great extent accomplished in himself. I do feel, Brothers and Sisters, more and more that my soul must wait only upon the Lord, and that my expectation must be from Him alone. You, too, must come here and learn that the Lord will provide, but it is only in the mountain of the Lord that this sweet Truth of God can be seen.

II. Now for the next point. The cedars of Lebanon are a GLORIOUS DISPLAY OF DIVINE CARE.  
1. First, in the abundance of their supply. No river, as I have observed, rolls at their feet. No canals keep their leaf from withering—man uses no labor and employs no skill to irrigate the steeps of Lebanon—and yet do the cedars need anything? Look at them! Stand under their shadow and see if they want any good thing. The text tells us, that so far from wanting, they are saturated—“The trees of the Lord are full.” Man’s trees may sometimes be ready to perish for lack of moisture. They may be frostbitten and their shoots may be nipped— but the trees of the Lord are full—there is never any want there. There is no want to them that fear Him.  
Dear Friends, those Believers who have learned most to live by faith possess the richest part of the land of promise. Other Believers live in the land of Egypt and are often making bricks without straw. But these dwell in the land which flows with milk and honey. They have passed the wilderness, and having believed, they have entered into rest. The lot of the truly full grown Believer who stays himself upon his God alone, is well set forth in the promise, “His soul shall dwell at ease and his seed shall inherit the earth.”  
He has his troubles, but faith makes them light. He has his wants, but faith never permits him to call them wants, for they are always supplied before the necessity begins to pinch him. Other men may, with all their watching and wisdom, come to nothing. They may rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness and yet be poor. But they who stay upon God in temporals and spirituals, if Heaven should shake, and if the pillars of the earth should be moved and the sea should be dried up, yet their place of defense shall be munitions of rocks. “Their bread shall be given them and their water shall be sure.”  
See this on a large scale in the case of our dear brother Muller’s institution at Bristol. We often see institutions sending out fresh begging appeals—there is some new claim upon their funds. The Lancashire distress has turned aside very much contributions from this object and that society. Of course it is so—these societies usually lean on man and rest upon an arm of flesh. But our Bristol Brother, by prayer and faith makes known his wants unto God and when does he lack any good thing? When needs he issue a begging appeal? Verily, I do believe that if all England were in famine, the orphan house at Bristol would have sufficient supplies. Whatever may happen, the Lord has promised to hear prayer, and He will honor faith—the cedars of Lebanon shall be full if all the trees of the plain be famished.  
I would to God we could exhibit still more and more of the same prinple of faith in the conduct of our college. And in that case, too, I am persuaded that whatever may occur and whatever may happen, as that is God’s work, it never can lack. My confidence in that matter is in my God. I am glad that so many of the Lord’s people are made the instruments to supply the wants of the college, but still I look far higher. Sometimes when friends say, “Mention it to the people,” I do not like to do it, lest I should lean too much on you. God’s own work shall be carried on by God’s own means. And I am sure He will send what it requires and in a way which shall be for the glory of His name. They are happy—I am a witness that they are—Brothers and Sisters, they are well supplied, who, like the cedars, exhibit Divine cultivation and independence of man.  
2. Again, note concerning these cedars that they are not only well supplied, but they are always green. Other trees refreshed with rivers, if they have the whole Nile at their roots, must drop their leaves once every year at the command of winter—and then they stretch out their bare limbs, as if they prayed for the return of spring. The oaks of Bashan languish, the fig tree casts her leaves, the ash and the elm are ashamed, but you, O cedar, you live in perpetual spring! The green lawns of your horizontal branches fail not even in the year of drought.  
The birds always sing in her branches, and the storks make their nests in due season among her boughs. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is so with the man who lives upon Christ alone. He has not the changes of other men. He has his trials, but he sings through them. The reason why many of us sink so low in spirit and hang our harps on the willows, is only this—want of faith. But if—  
*“Our faith is in the Lord alone,  
Our rock and refuge is His Throne,”*  
so that we can say with Habakkuk, “Though the fig tree shall not blossom,” and so on, “yet will I rejoice in the Lord.” Let our faith be vigorous and unstaggering, let us be planted up there where God has put us—on the rocky side of Lebanon—in the midst of all kinds of difficulties and dangers, yet our leaf shall be always green and we shall not know when drought comes.  
3. Observe the grandeur and size of these trees. I have found upon reference to Mr. Thompson’s work, “The Laud and the Book,” that several of the trees measure forty-one feet in girth, so that they are real giants of the forest. Think of it and admire—never watered by man, never cared for by him—depending upon God and upon God alone—and yet they have grown to the height of one hundred feet and forty feet in girth! Ah, and what magnificent Christians those are who come to rest upon God alone. You think, perhaps, that they, having so little supply from second causes, would be feeble!  
But, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is often that supply from beneath which makes us feeble. I believe it is our riches which make us poor and our strength which makes us weak, for when I am weak then am I strong. When I am brought down to feel that all the creatures put together could not help me the turn of a penny, when I know that all my power and wisdom and strength is not worth so much as a rusty nail, if I put it altogether and strain it to the utmost, O then it is so blessed to get a grip of God—to strike one’s root down to the heart of the Rock of Ages and to rest alone on Him!  
The best Christians, the most splendid specimens of Divine husbandry are those who are most delivered from confidence in the creature. You shall read all biographies and you shall find in proportion as men become little in self, and little in creature love and creature trust, they become great and mighty in their doings for the Lord.  
4. Note next, the fragrance of these venerable trees. Hosea speaks of the smell of Lebanon and we know that cedar wood was among the aromatic substances burned upon the altar of the sanctuary. Travelers tell us that when they stand under the cedars of Lebanon the smell is most delightful, the fragrant cedar wood perfumes all the air. Now few of men’s trees do that. Some of them do. The citron and the orange and lemon load the air with sweets, but many others, cultivate them as we may, and nurture with the greatest care, never can or will perfume the air. How sweetly do God’s trees sweeten all about them!  
If your piety comes from God and if you wait in spirit upon God and lean only upon Him, there will be about you such a sweet fragrance that you shall be acceptable unto God in Christ Jesus and acceptable to your Brothers and Sisters, and even an ungodly world shall perceive that there is in you the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. No man will yield so delightful a perfume as the man who is much with Christ. The scented piece of clay declared that it owed its perfume to sleeping with a rose—and if we have learned to rest upon the bosom of the Savior, if we have taught our soul to say, “My soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him”—our companionship and confidence in God will yield a sweet fragrance both to our words, to our actions, and to everything to which we set our hands.  
5. Attentively think upon the perpetuity of these cedars. Do you remember how carnal men said, concerning certain works of faith which we ourselves attempted, “Ah, well, it may be all very well, it will last for a time, it is a sort of spurt of enthusiasm. It will last for a time and then die out like the wick of a candle.” Societies that are blessed with patrons, vice-presidents, secretaries, directors, subscribers and that use flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music—those will get on. There is something to look at there. There is something tangible.  
But a scheme which lives only upon God! The business man says, “I do not see it. I look at the pounds, shillings and pence. I have not learned to look at things unseen, I cannot confide in these visionary ideas.” Now, every year somebody has said, “Muller, of Bristol, will come to nothing, Mr. So-and-So has died, that old gentleman who used to give him two thousand pounds and three thousand pounds a year. Now he is dead, now it will come to an end and cannot keep on.” After his death somebody else was going to die, and that somebody died, but the orphans were still fed and housed. Even at this moment, the men of sight are prophesying evil against that marvel of faith in the same way they might tremble for the cedars and talk thus.  
Now, here are these cedars of God upon the top of Lebanon, with nobody to take care of them, they will surely be destroyed. What? No society pledged to guarantee their preservation! Why, there will not be one of them left in three weeks. They will be cut down for the sake of their timber, or carried off piecemeal by tourists. Ah, but my dear Brothers and Sisters, there are some of those cedars that can be reckoned to be at the very least three thousand five hundred years old and some of them are doubtless older. And we cannot, of course, except by cutting them down, discover their precise age by counting the rings.

But there they stand and have stood all those hundreds and thousands of years with no ranger of the forest to look after them—just God Himself to be the Farmer and Keeper of them all! Depend upon it, Christian, if you rest upon God, your simple faith is a principle which you may use, not only for ten or twenty years, but all your threescore years and ten! It serves you in your youth to be your joy—it shall serve you in your old age to be your staff. If you could outlive Methuselah, yet still you should find that God would keep the cedars full and preserve you among them safely even to the end.  
6. I conclude this head by noticing that these cedars are very venerable. A traveler declares that often as he has stayed beneath their shadow, he has never done so without feeling a solemn awe. Mr. Thompson has slept under their shade on one or two occasions, and as he has looked up and seen the stars and sometimes climbed up the cedars and marked how they spread out all their branches horizontally, making a series of green lawns one above another, he says he has never gazed upon them without feeling there was something holy in the spot.  
The mountain tribes treat them with superstitious reverence, calling them saints and giving to each a name. They command, for their antiquity and glory, the veneration of man. Scarcely could even the brute pass them, one would think, without looking up with something of respect. It is most evidently so with the Christian who lives wholly upon God. Your common sort of Christians who have very little faith and live by feelings— your ordinary sort of Christians who live half by faith and half by works— mere professors who have never entered into the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High and think all I am talking about to be mere mysticism.  
These, I say, who do not understand the word “faith” to be so broad that it encompasses the whole of human life, so deep that it penetrates to the depths of the heart and yet so high that hope cannot desire anything greater than faith can give—these who have not learned faith fully, have no respect from among men—but those who can act upon the supernatural principle of depending upon God, sooner or later will get the respect even of the most careless. The day is coming when these cedars of God shall be honored in the eyes of the most ungodly—in that great day when the wicked shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt, then these cedars of God shall have their time of honor and the whole world shall know them to be plants of the Lord’s right-hand planting.  
I leave this point. I would, dear Friends, that you and I knew more and more what it was to live upon the Lord alone. I believe it is the safest way of life and I am certain it is the happiest. Let the cedar’s lot be my lot, let me have my God to be my sole stay and my support and I shall be rich to all the intents of bliss.  
III. Now for the third and last point. Taking the text as it stands and reading it, “The trees of the Lord are full of sap,” which, although it is not in the original, is not, after all, a violence to it. It is not a literal translation, but still it is a free translation that does not violate the sense of the Hebrew. Taking our version, I get my third particular, FULLNESS OF LIVING PRINCIPLE.  
1. “The trees of the Lord are full of sap,” of which, I shall notice first, that this is vitally necessary. Without sap, the cedar is no tree, it becomes a dead post and nothing more. Sap is needful to make it flourish and exist. Without the life of God in the heart, a man is no Christian. He may attend His Church twice every Sunday, or he may go to Chapel. He may read his Bible regularly and have family prayers in his house. He may subscribe his guineas to all sorts of societies. He may be very kind to the poor. He may be one whose outward life and conversation are quite beyond rebuke and yet, unless he has been born again and has been made a partaker of the mysterious Spirit of the living God, he is not one of the Lord’s trees.  
Vitality is essential to a Christian. We call not dead ones, sons, and if you have not been quickened, you cannot be children of God. It is not likely that Christ is married to a dead corpse. And if you have not been quickened by Divine Grace, you are not His bride, nor even a member of His family. The body always ejects dead substances. With great pain and difficulty, a decayed bone is pushed out from the flesh, through an ulcer, perhaps—but out it must come. Even so, there are no dead members of Christ’s body. Painfully would the body strive to eject such a member. There must be life—a vital principle infused into us by God the Holy Spirit. The trees of the Lord are, without exception, full of sap.  
2. Next, essentially mysterious. I do not understand the sap—I suppose the botanist may. The sap is the blood of the tree and in the tree there is a circulation very much like the circulation of the blood through our veins and heart. But who understands the circulation of the blood—it is a great mystery—by what force it rises and by what power it descends again? Who shall tell how that river of life is guided? It is a Divine mystery. So is it with the Life within us—it is a greater mystery still. You may discover the sea and understand it, but never the Life of God in a Christian.  
This is God Himself in a Christian, God infused into the Christian’s soul as a Divine principle. How shall I set this forth? Regeneration is the Holy Spirit coming into a man and becoming that man’s Life. And the Life in a Believer afterward feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ—like sustaining like—Divine Life being sustained by Divine food. Do you know anything about this mystery? “The wind blows where it lists and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” Everyone who is a tree of the Lord must be full of this essential mystery—“The trees of the Lord are full of sap.”  
3. Thirdly, it is radically secret. Note that. Who knows how the roots get their sap? They go searching through the soil with their little roots, looking after that food which is exactly suitable to the constitution of the tree. But how they transmute the mineral into the vegetable, how they suck out the various gasses, or draw out the particles they need, who can tell? Now our root is Christ, our life is hid in Him. This is the secret of the Lord. The root of the Christian is as secret as the life itself. Who can comprehend the mystery of the life within the Believer? The root of that life, that vital union with Christ, that reception of Divine Grace—of his very soul out of the wounds of the Savior—who shall explain this? Only this we must say, however Divine Grace flows there from Jesus, it must be there and it must come from Christ—for all the trees of the Lord are full of sap.  
4. Then, again, it is permanently active. In the Christian the Divine Life is always active—not in fruit-bearing, but in some operation within. The sap in the cedar never lies still. The sap in common trees is still in the winter, and if you cut a tree in the early spring, as I unfortunately did, then the sap comes streaming down in great white streams from the wound you have made, because the sap has begun to flow. The tree should be cut at some other period of the year—but the cedar always has its sap active. Perforate it when you may, a gum begins to exude at all times. So is it with the Christian.  
His Divine Graces, are not all of them in activity, but the Life is always in activity. My hand is not always moving, but my blood is. I am not always working for God, but my heart is always living upon God. The essential Life of the Christian never dies—never ceases from being in active operation. There is a seed in him which cannot sin, because it is born of God, but which must still go towards holiness, because it comes from God. I do not understand this permanent activity, but still, I know it is in everyone of you, if you are Christians, for “the trees of the Lord are full of sap.”  
5. I shall almost have finished when I notice, in the next place, that it is externally operative. A traveler tells us that in the wood, the bark, and even the cones of the cedar there is an abundance of resin. They are saturated with it so that he says he can scarcely touch one of the cedars of Lebanon without having the turpentine or resin of them upon his hands. That is always the way with a truly healthy Christian—his Divine Grace is externally manifested. There is the inner Life within, it is active, and byand-by, when it is in a right state, it saturates everything. You talk with the gracious man, he cannot help talking about Christ. You go into his house, you will soon see that a Christian lives there.  
You notice his actions and you will see he has been with Jesus. He is so full of sap that the sap must come out. He has so much of the Divine Life within, that the holy oil and Divine balsam must flow from him. I am afraid this cannot be said of all of us. It is because we get to be dependent upon man and not on God, and therefore have little of this sap. But if we are independent of man and live wholly upon God, we shall be so full of sap that every part of us will betray our piety.  
6. And then let me say lastly, that this sap is abundantly to be desired. Oh, when I think what glory a full grown Christian brings to God, what honor the faith of a Believer puts upon Jesus! When I think what a knowledge of God and Divine things an advanced Believer possesses, when I contemplate his joy and peace of mind—I could wish that everyone of you, (though it is well to be hyssops on God’s wall)—could be cedars upon God’s Lebanon! Oh that we would grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!  
There is something of the sap in us, let us pray for more. We live upon Christ. If our hearts do not awfully deceive us, you and I can say— *“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”*  
The Lord knows our hearts and He Himself knows that we can say as Peter did, “Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You.” But oh, is there one among you that is content with himself? I am not—I am ashamed of myself—forgetting the things that are behind, I would press forward to that which is before. Not as though I had already obtained, either were already perfect. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, there is such a height of glorious independence of man and a confident dependence upon God! And there is such a blessed internal joy and peace, such a Divine fullness of sap which we may yet have that I pray none of you rest till you obtain it to the praise and the glory of His Grace, who has made you accepted in the Beloved.

Sinner, that which I have been holding up as the strength and beauty of a Christian, must be Life to you. Come, every man, and trust in the Lord, for if you trust in Him, you shall never be confounded. The Lord add now a blessing upon you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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LESSONS FROM NATURE  
NO. 1005

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 13, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills  
are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rooks for the conies.” Psalm 104:17, 18.**

THIS Psalm is all through a song of Nature, the adoration of God in the great outward temple of the universe. Some in these modern times have thought it to be a mark of high spirituality never to observe Nature. And I remember sorrowfully reading the expressions of a godly person, who, in sailing down one of the most famous rivers in the world, closed his eyes, lest the picturesque beauties of the scene should divert his mind from Scriptural topics. This may be regarded by some as profound spirituality—to me it seems to savor of absurdity!

There may be persons who think they have grown in Divine Grace when they have attained to this. It seems to me that they are growing out of their senses. To despise the creating work of God, what is it but, in a measure, to despise God Himself? “Whoever mocks the poor despises his Maker.” To despise the Maker, then, is evidently a sin. To think little of God under the aspect of the Creator is a crime. We should, none of us, think it a great honor to ourselves if our friends considered our productions to be unworthy of admiration, and rather injurious to their minds than improving.

If, when they passed our workmanship, they turned their eyes away lest they should suffer injury by looking at it, we should not regard them as very respectful to ourselves—surely the despising of that which is made is somewhat akin to the despising of the Maker Himself. David tells us that, “The Lord shall rejoice in His works.” If He rejoices in what He has made, shall not those who have communion with Him rejoice in His works also? “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of them that have pleasure therein.” Despise not the work, lest you despise the Worker.

This prejudice against the beauties of the material universe reminds me of the lingering love to Judaism, which acted like a spell upon Peter of old. When the sheet knit at the four corners descended before him, and the voice said, “Rise, Peter, kill, and eat,” he replied that he had not eaten anything that was common or unclean. He needed that the Voice should speak to him from Heaven again and again before he would fully learn the lesson, “What God has cleansed that call not you common.”

The Jew thinks this and that unclean, though Christ has cleansed it. And certain Christians appear to regard Nature as unclean. The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea—the glorious sunrise and sunset, the snow-clad Alps, the ancient forests, the mysterious glaciers, the boundless ocean—God has cleansed them—call them not common. Here on this

earth is Calvary where the Savior died, and by His sacrifice, offered not within walls and roofs, He made this outer world a temple where everything does speak of God’s Glory.

If you are unclean, all things will be unclean to you. But if you have washed your robe and made it white in the blood of the Lamb, and if the Holy Spirit has overshadowed you, then this world is but a nether Heaven. It is but the lower chamber of which the upper story glows with the full splendor of God, where angels see Him face to face! And this lower story is not without glory, for in the Person of Christ Jesus we have seen God, and have communion and fellowship with Him even now.

It appears to me that those who would forbear the study of Nature, or shun the observation of its beauties, are conscious of the weakness of their own spirituality. When the hermits and monks shut themselves out from the temptations of life, foolish persons said, “These are strong in Grace.” Not so, they were so weak in Grace that they were afraid to have their graces tried! They ran away from the battle like the cowards they were, and shut themselves up because they knew their swords were not of the true Jerusalem metal and they were not men who could resist valiantly.

Monasticism was the confession of a weakness which they endeavored to cover with the vain show of humility, and the presence of superior sanctity. If my graces are strong, I can look upon the outward world and draw forth its good without feeling its evil, if evil is there. But if my religion is mainly fictitious, then hypocrisy dictates to me the affectation of unusual spirituality, or at any rate I have not Divine Grace enough to rise from a contemplation of the works of God to a nearer fellowship with God Himself.

It cannot be that Nature of itself debases me, or diverts me from God. I ought to suspect a deficiency in myself when I find that the Creator’s handiworks have not a good effect upon my soul. Moreover, rest assured Brethren, that He who wrote the Bible, the second and clearest Revelation of His Divine mind, wrote also the first book, the book of Nature. And who are we that we should derogate from the worth of the first because we esteem the second. Milton’s “Paradise Regained” is certainly inferior to his “Paradise Lost.” But the Eternal God has no inferior productions—all His works are masterpieces.

There is no quarrel between Nature and Revelation, only fools think so—to wise men the one illustrates and establishes the other. Walking in the fields at eventide, as Isaac did, I see in the ripening harvest the same God of whom I read in the Word that He covenanted that seed-time and harvest should not cease. Surveying the midnight skies, I remember Him who, while He calls the stars by their names, also binds up the broken in heart. Who will neglect the volume of Creation, or the volume of Revelation? I shall delight in them both as long as I live!

Let us, then, follow David this morning, for when he wrote our text, he evidently traveled among the works of God, admiring and adoring. Let us go with him and see if there is not something to be learned among the birds and storks, the wild goats and the conies.

I. Our first observation from our text shall be this—FOR EACH PLACE GOD HAS PREPARED A SUITABLE FORM OF LIFE. For the fir trees, the stork. For the high hills, the wild goat, or steinbock. For the rocks, the conies, or rabbits. Almost every part of God’s world was meant to be the abode of some creature or another. On earth, a countless company wait upon the Lord for meat. And as for the sea, it contains “creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts.” Among the trees which shade the brooks, the birds are singing. In the tall somber pine, the silent storks are building their nests. On the lofty crags, virgin as yet to human foot, the chamois leaps from ledge to ledge. And away, where human voice was never heard, the marmot, the mouse, and the rabbit (whichever creature the Hebrew may mean) find their dwelling place among the rocks. The teaching of this fact is clear.

We shall also find that for all parts of the spiritual universe God has provided suitable forms of Divine life. Think out that thought a moment. Each age has its saints. The first age had its holy men, who walked with God—and when the golden age had gone, and men everywhere had polluted themselves, God had His Noah. In after days, when men had again multiplied upon the face of the earth, and sin abounded, there was Job in the land of Uz, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob dwelling in tents in the land which had been given to them by promise. On whatever period of the world’s history you choose to place your finger you may rest assured that as God is there, so is there also some form of the Divine life extant.

Some of God’s twice-born creatures are to be found even in the most barren ages. If you come to a period like that of Ahab, when a lonely Elijah bitterly complains, “I, only I am left, and they seek my life to destroy it,” you shall hear a still small voice that says, “Yet have I reserved unto Myself seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to Baal.” God has still His elect remnant in the most wicked times to whom He has given a banner, because of the Truth. When the light was almost gone from Israel, and formalism had eclipsed the sun of Judaism, there were still a Simeon and an Anna waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

Times of fearful persecution, when to mention the name of Christ was to sentence yourself to death, have not been devoid of saints. But rather in the hottest times of oppression God has brought forth heroes equal to the emergency. The fiercer the trial the stronger the men. The Church of God, like the fabled salamander, has lived and flourished amid the flames, and has seemed to feed upon the flames that threatened to devour her. As on the crags where it appears impossible for life to exist, God places wild goats, so on the high crags of persecution He upholds men whose feet are like hind’s feet, and who glory as they tread upon their high places.

Oppression brings out the heavenly manhood of the saints and lets the devil see what strength God can put into the weakness of man. There have been times of heresy, too—such as the age of rampant Arianism—but saints have outlived it. God has provided for such an emergency brave defenders of the faith. What a man was Athanasius, when standing upright and alone, he said, “I know that Jesus Christ is very God, and if all the

world believe the contrary, I, Athanasius, stand against the world.”

Sardis may have a name to live and be dead, but the Lord says, “you have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” Is not this an encouraging Truth of God? As it has been in the past, it is in the present—and it will be in the future! Do not give way to gloomy forebodings as to the Church’s future welfare. Whine not with those who deplore these evil days and prognosticate overwhelming ills. We are told that we are passing through a crisis, but I remember that it was a crisis twenty years ago, and our grandsires could tell us of a crisis every year of the last fifty!

The fact is, there is no such crisis as is talked of. The crisis is past, for Christ said, “Now is the crisis of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” When Jesus went to Golgotha and bled and died, the crisis of the Church and of the world was over. The victory of truth and of Christ was secured beyond all shadow of a doubt. Even if times should darken and the night should grow thicker and thicker, rest assured that He who has the conies for the rocks, and goats for the high hills, and finds for the forests the stork, will find for every age a suitable form of Christian life that shall bring glory to His name!

As it has been in every age, so is it in every position in which men are found. Go into all classes of society and you shall find that the Christian religion, if received in truth, is equally well adapted for all conditions. Here and there upon the throne have been found those that have feared God, and have gone from a crown on earth to a crown in Heaven. There can be no better qualification for swaying a kingdom than obedience to the King of kings. Go straight down from the palace to the poorhouse—little enough of comfort there—but the richest consolation which can be found for the meanest pauper will be brought by that hand which was nailed to the tree.

He it is that can console the sorrows of poverty as well as sanctify the risks of wealth! Go where you will among the busy, whose cares buzz around them, and you shall find no relief for aching heads like a contemplation of the love of Christ—or go among those who have leisure and spend it in solitude—no meditation can be so sweet to while away their hours as the meditation which springs out of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Glory be to God! No man need say, “My trade does not permit me to be a Christian.” If it is so, you have no business to follow that trade, for no lawful calling is without its saint.

Up there among the precipices the wild goat finds safe footing—and so amid dignity and honor saints can survive, and in the dark rock-rifts of this sin-smitten city, as conies live among the rocks, so Christian men are useful and happy. Where the Believer is persecuted on every side he shall not be forsaken, and where, through the example of the wicked, his heart is grieved, he shall be preserved like righteous Lot. As God maintains life in every region, so does He maintain spiritual life in every position and every calling. Have comfort in this, you who are placed in circumstances unfavorable to Divine Grace.  
Again, you shall find spiritual life in every Church. I know it is the notion of the bigot that all the truly godly people belong to the denomination which he adorns. Orthodoxy is my doxy—heterodoxy is anybody else’s doxy who does not agree with me! All the good people go to little Bethel, and nowhere else—they all worship at Zoar, and they sing out of suchand-such a selection—and as for those who cannot say Shibboleth, and lay a pretty good stress on the “h,” but who pronounce it “Sibboleth”—let the fords of the Jordan be taken, and let them be put to death! True, it is not fashionable to roast them alive, but we will condemn their souls to everlasting perdition, which is the next best thing, and may not appear to be quite so uncharitable.

Many suppose that because there is grievous error in a Church concerning an ordinance or a doctrine, therefore no living children of God are there. Ah, dear Brethren, this severe opinion arises from want of knowing better. A mouse had lived in a box all its life and one day crawled up to the edge of it and looked round on what it could see. Now the box only stood in a lumber room, but the mouse was surprised at its vastness, and exclaimed—“How big the world is!” If some bigots would get out of their boxes and only look a little way round them, they would find the realm of Divine Grace to be far wider than they dream!

It is true that these pastures are a most proper place for sheep, but yet upon yonder hilltops wild goats are pastured by the Great Shepherd. It is true that yonder plains covered with verdure are best fitted for cattle, but the Lord of All has His beasts in the forest and His conies among the rocks. You may have to look a long while before you find these living things but He sees them when you do not—and it is a deal more important to a cony for God to see it, than it is for a man to see it. And so it is an infinitely more weighty matter for a child of God for his Father to know that he is His child, than for his Brother to know it.

If my Brother will not believe me to be a Christian, he cannot help being my Brother. He may do what he will in his unkindness, but if I am one of God’s children and he, also, is one, the tie of brotherhood cannot be broken between us. I love to think that the Lord has His hidden ones— even in Churches that have sadly degenerated from the faith. And, although it is yours and mine to denounce error unsparingly, and with the iconoclastic hammer to go through the land and break the idols of all the churches in pieces as far as God gives us strength, yet there is not a lamb among Christ’s flock that we would disdain to feed—there is not the least of all His people, however mistaken in judgment, whom our soul would not embrace in ardent love.

God, in Nature, has placed life in singular spots, and so has He put spiritual life into strange out-of-the-way places. He has His own chosen where least we should look for them. Once more, there are to be found God’s people in every city. Some of you are going away, it may be, to the ends of the earth and this word may be comfortable to you. The Lord has an elect people everywhere. The wild goats are on the rocks, and the conies among the stones, and the storks in the trees. Go where you will, you shall find that God has a living people. Or if you should be sent to a country where as yet there are no converted men or women, let not that discourage you, but rather say, “I am sent with the purpose of finding out God’s elect, who as yet are hidden in sin. I am to be the instrument of finding out the Lord’s own blood-bought but hidden ones here.”

When you go into a city that is given to idolatry, you shall hear it said to you, “I have much people in this city.” Go, therefore, and labor to find out who they are. Introduce the Gospel—tell of the love of Jesus—and you shall soon find that your efforts are rewarded by the discovery of those who shall love your Savior, and delight in the same Truth which now charms your heart. Do not believe that there is a rock without its wild goat. Do not think that there is a fir forest without its stork, or that there are to be found trees by the brook without their birds. Expect to find where God dwells that there are some who are sojourners with Him, as all their fathers were. I shall leave the first point, repeating the sentence, for each place there is a form of life.

II. Secondly, the text teaches us plainly that EACH CREATURE HAS ITS APPROPRIATE PLACE. Birds with their nests for the cedars of Lebanon, storks for the fir trees, wild goats for the high hills, and conies for the rocks. Each of these creatures looks most beautiful at home. Go into the Zoological Gardens and see the poor animals there under artificial conditions, and you can little guess what they are at home. A lion in a cage is a very different creature from a lion in the wilderness.

The stork looks wretched in his wire pen, and you would hardly know him as the same creature if you saw him on the housetops or in the fir trees. Each creature looks best in its own place. Take that truth, now, and use it for yourself. Each man has, by God, a providential position appointed to him, and the position ordained for each Christian is that in which he looks best. It is the best for him and he is the best for that. And if you could change his position, and shift him to another, he would not be half as happy, nor half as useful, nor half so much himself.

Put the stork on the high hills—put the wild goat on the fir trees—what monstrosities! Take my dear Brother who has been a working man this last twenty years, and always been a spiritually-minded man, and make him Lord Mayor of London, and you would spoil him altogether. Take a good hearer and set him preaching, and he would make a sorry appearance. A man out of place is not seen to advantage—you see the wrong side of him—the gracious side is hidden. The position in which God has placed me is the best for me. Let me remember this when I am grumbling and complaining. It may be I have got past that foolish discontent which is altogether selfish, but perhaps I repine because I think if I were in a different position, I could glorify God more.

This species of discontent is very insinuating, but let us beware of it. It is foolish to cry, “if I were placed in a different position, I could do so much more for God!” You could not do so much as you can do now. I am sure the goat would not show the wisdom of God so well in a fir tree, as he would up on a high hill. And you would not display the Grace of God so well anywhere else as you can do where you are. Ah, says the young Christian, “I am only an apprentice. If I were a master man, I think I could then glorify God.” Sir, if you cannot magnify Him in your apprenticeship, you will not do so when you become a journeyman.

“Oh, but my shop is so little, my trade brings me in such a small amount, I can give but little, and I have such few opportunities of doing good.” Be slow to leave your calling till you have plain indications from Providence that you ought to do so—many a man, in moving from his place, has been as a bird that has wandered from her nest. God knows better than you what is best for you. Bow your soul to His Sovereign will. God appoints our position infinitely better than we could appoint it, even if we could have the choosing of it.

My beloved Friends, it is not only that each form of life has its own best position as to Providence, but it is so as to

 experience. God has not made two creatures precisely alike. You shall gather leaves from a tree and you shall not find two veined in precisely the same way. In Christian experience it is the same. Wherever there is living Christian experience, it is different from everybody else’s experience in some respect. In a family of children each child may be like its father, and yet each child shall be different from each other child.

And among the children of God, though they all have the likeness of Christ in a measure, yet are they not all exactly the one like the other. You read the other day the life of John Bunyan, and you said, “Oh, if I had experience like John Bunyan, then I should know I was a child of God.” This was foolish. The biographies that are published in our magazines in many cases do some good, but more mischief. For there are Christian people who begin at once to say, “Have I felt precisely thus? Have I felt exactly that?—If not, I am lost.” Have you felt yourself a sinner and Christ a Savior? Are you emptied of self and do you look to Christ alone? Well, if no other soul has trod the same path as you have done, you are in a right path!

And though your experience may have eccentricities in it that differ from all others, it is right it should be so. God has not made the wild goat like the cony, nor has He made the stork like any other bird—He has made each to fit the place it is to occupy—and He makes your experience to be suitable to the bringing out of some point of His Divine Glory, which could not be brought out otherwise. Some are full of rejoicing, others are often depressed. A few keep the happy medium. Many soar aloft, and then dive into the deeps again. Let these varied experiences, as they are all equally clear phases of the same Divine loving kindness, be accepted, and let them be rejoiced in.

The same holds good as to individuality of character. Each creature has its appropriate place, and I believe that each constitution is meant, under the power of Grace, to be suitable for a man’s position. I might wish to be of a different temperament from what I am—I sometimes think so—but in wiser moments I would not wish to alter anything in myself but that which is sinful. Martin Luther might have wished that he had been as gentle as Melancthon, but then we might have had no Reformation! Melancthon might certainly sometimes have wished that he had been as energetic as Martin Luther, but then Luther might have lacked his most

tender comforter if Melancthon had been as rough as he.

Peter might have been improved if he had not been so rough, and John might possibly have been improved if he had been somewhat more firm. But after all, when God makes Peter he is best as Peter. And when He makes John he is best as John—and it is very foolish when Peter wants to be John, and when John pines to be Peter!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the practical matter is be yourselves in your religion. Never attempt to counterfeit another’s virtues, nor try to square your experience according to another man’s feelings, nor endeavor to mold your character so that you may look as if you were like a certain good man whom you admire. No, ask the Lord, who made a new man of you, to let your manhood come out as He meant it, and whichever Grace He meant to be prominent, let it be prominent. If you are meant to play the hero and rush into the thick of the battle, then let courage be developed. Or if He designed you to lie in the hospital and suffer, then let patience have its perfect work.

But ask the Lord to mold you after His own mind, that as He finds a stork for a fir tree and a fir tree for a stork—a hill for a wild goat, and a wild goat for a hill—He will find a place for you, the man. And find for you, the man, the place that He has created for you, There His name shall be most glorified, and you shall be the most safe. Kick not against the pricks, but take kindly to the yoke, and serve your day and generation till your Master calls you Home.

III. Now, briefly, a third point. It appears from the text that EVERY CREATURE THAT GOD HAS MADE IS PROVIDED WITH SHELTER. Birds fly to the trees and the stork to the fir. The wild goat to the high hills, and the cony to the rocks. There is a shelter for every one of these creatures, great and small. Think a moment, then—if God has made each creature happy, and given a place of refuge to each creature—then, depend upon it, He has not left man’s soul without a shelter. And here is an important Truth of God, for every man is certainly in danger, and every thinking man knows it.

My God, do You shield and shelter the cony in the rock, and is there no rock for me to shelter in? Assuredly You have not made man and left him without a refuge! When You give to the rock rabbit the cleft in which he may hide himself, there must be a shelter for man. This must certainly be true, because you and I, if we have observed our inner life, must have felt conscious that nothing here below can fill an immortal soul! You have prospered in business, and have enjoyed good health. But for all that, in quiet moments of reflection, you feel a craving for something not to be found beneath the sun. Have you not felt yearnings after the Infinite—a hungering which bread cannot satisfy? A thirst which a river could not quench?

And are you never conscious—I know I am as a man—I speak not as a Christian now—of cold shivers of fear which make the entire manhood to tremble? The mind looks forward and considers, “And shall I live forever? When my body rots, shall I continue? Am I a vessel launched upon the river of existence, and shall I be borne onward to a shoreless and mysterious sea? And what will be that sea? Will it be a calm, or tossed with storms?” Or, to change the figure, “I shall sleep, but in that sleep of death, what dreams may come?”

Have you never felt all that, and said within yourself, “O that there were a place where I could hide myself, never to tremble again! O that I could grasp something that would satisfy my insatiable lodgings! O that I could get my foot upon a rock and no longer feel that quicksand is beneath me! O that I knew for sure and indisputable, and possessed a treasure that would enrich me forever”?

Well, then, if you have such longings as these, surely there must be a provision to meet them. The stork has an instinct for building a nest of a certain sort. It is too large a nest to be placed on a bush—she needs a tree. There is a tree somewhere, then, for God never made a stork for a tree but he also made a tree for the stork. Here is a wild goat—you put it down on a flat meadow and it is not happy. Give it the greenest pasture, it looks up and pines. Rest assured that since those little feet are meant to traverse rocks and crags, there are rocks and crags that are meant for those feet to leap upon!

A chamois needs the Alps, and the conclusion is verified by fact. Yonder little cony cannot live anywhere but among the stones—it delights to conceal itself in the fissures of the rock. Then rest assured there are rocks meant for conies. So for me, with my thirst, my longing, my pining, my mysterious instincts—there is a God somewhere, there is a Heaven somewhere, there is an Atonement somewhere—there is a fullness somewhere to meet my emptiness. Man wants a shelter, there must be a shelter. Let us show you what it is. Beloved, there is a shelter for man from the sense of past guilt. It is because we are guilty that we are fearful—we have broken our Maker’s Law and therefore we are afraid.

But our Maker came from Heaven to earth. Jesus, the Christ of God, came here and was made Man, and bore that we might never bear His Father’s righteous wrath. And whoever believes in Jesus shall find perfect rest in those dear wounds of His. Since Christ suffered for me, my guilt is gone! My punishment was endured by my Substitute, therefore do I hear the voice that says, “Comfort you, comfort you My people! Say unto them that their warfare is accomplished. For they have received at the Lord’s hand double for all their sins.”

And as for future fears, he who believes in Jesus finds a refuge from them in the Fatherhood of God. He who trusts Christ, says—“Now I have no fear about the present, nor about the future. Let catastrophe follow catastrophe, let the world crash and all the universe go to ruin—beneath the wings of the Eternal God I must be safe. All things must work together for my good, for I love God, and have been called according to His purpose.” What a blessed shelter this is! The little conies in their rock-clefts are perfectly at ease, and so we, when we enter fully into the Truth of our adoption of God, are filled with unutterable peace.

And as for the present, with its cares, griefs, and heart-throbs, there is the Holy Spirit abiding in us, the Comforter. And we fly to Him and receive consolations so rich and powerful that this day we feel at peace in the

midst of discomforts, and if perplexed we are not in despair. Brothers and Sisters, there is a shelter in the Atonement of Christ, in the Fatherhood of God, in the abiding Presence of the Comforter—there is a shelter for man—would God that all of us had found it!

IV. And now just a moment of your attention will be wanted for the fourth observation, that FOR EACH CREATURE THE SHELTER IS APPROPRIATE. The tree for the bird. The fir tree, a particular and special tree, for the stork. A high hill for the steinbock or ibex, and the rocks for the hyrax or rabbit. Whatever creature it may be, each shall have his own suitable shelter. But you will reply to me, is there a shelter, then, for each individual man? Did you not say that there was only one shelter for manhood?

If I did not say it, I certainly will say it now. There is only one shelter under Heaven or in Heaven for any man born of woman, but yet there is a shelter suitable for each. Christ Jesus suits all sorts of sinners, all sorts of sufferers. He is a Savior as suitable for me as if He came to save me and no one else. But He is a Redeemer as remarkably suitable to every other of His redeemed ones. Note, then, that there is a refuge in Christ Jesus for those simple trustful natures that take the Gospel at once and believe it.

These are like the little birds that fly to the trees and build their nests and begin to sing. These are the most common sort of Christians, but in some respects they are the best. They hear the Gospel, believe it to be God’s Word, accept it, and begin to sing. Jesus Christ exactly suits them. He is a shelter for those chosen birds of the air whom your heavenly Father daily feeds. But there are others of larger intellect, who require unusual support before they can build their nest and be at ease. These, like the stork, need a special support, and they find it in the Gospel. Since they are more weighty with doubt and perplexity, they need substantial Truths of God to rest on. These find great fir tree doctrines—and cedarlike principles in the Bible, and they rest in them.

Many of us this day are resting on the immutable things where it is impossible for God to lie. We rest upon the Substitution of Christ, and repose in the completeness of the Atonement. Some get hold of one great principle and some another in connection with the Grace of God. And God has been pleased to reveal strong, immovable, eternal, immutable principles in His Word which are suitable for thoughtful and troubled minds to rest on.

Moreover, we have in the Church of God persons of great reasoning powers—these love the craggy paths of thought—but when they come to Christ and trust in Him—though they are like the wild goat and love the high places, they find in the Scriptures good ground for them. The doctrine of election and all the mysteries of predestination, the deep and wonderful doctrines that are spoken of by the Apostle Paul—where is the man of thought who will not be at home among these if he loves sublimity?

If you have that turn of mind which delights to deal with the high things of God which have been the perplexity of men and angels, you shall find yourself at home—and what is better—safe, with the Gospel. If you are in Christ, you shall have good, solid, safe material for the most profound meditations. Perhaps, instead of being bold and daring and thoughtful, you are not comparable to the wild goat but you are a very timid, trembling little creature like the cony. If anyone claps his hands, away runs the cony—he always fears. But there is a shelter for conies! And so, in the Grace of God, for very timid trembling people there is a suitable refuge.

Here is a delightful shelter for some of you to run into—“Fear not, I am with you! Be not dismayed, I am your God.” Here is another—“He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Many a poor trembler has hidden under that condescending Word. If I cannot find shelter in one text, what a blessing it is the Bible is full of promises, and there are promises in the Bible which seem made for a certain form of mind, as if the Holy Spirit cast His thoughts and His Words into all sorts of molds to suit the habits of thought and mind of all whom He would bless!

O trembling Soul, though you are half afraid to say that you belong to Jesus, yet come and rest in Him! Hide in the rift of His side and you are safe!

V. Now we must close and we do so with this observation—EACH CREATURE USES ITS SHELTER—for the storks have made their nests in the fir trees, and the wild goats climb the high hills, and the conies hide among the rocks. I never heard of one of these creatures that neglected its shelter—they love their natural abodes. But I have heard of men who have neglected their God. I know women who have forgotten Christ. We say, “silly sheep.” Ah, if the sheep knew all about us, they would wonder we should call them silly! The cony in danger which does not seek its rock is foolish. But the soul in danger which does not seek its Savior is insane!

Insane? No, if there can be a madness which is as much beyond madness, as madness is beyond sanity, then such is the raving lunacy of a man who neglects the Savior. I have never heard of any of these creatures that they despise the shelter provided. The birds are satisfied with the trees, and the stork with the firs, and even the cony with its rock-hole. But, alas, there are men who despise Christ! God Himself becomes the shelter of sinners, and yet sinners despise their God! The Son of God opens His side and lays bare His heart that a soul may come and shelter there in the crimson cleft, and yet that soul for many a day refuses to accept the shelter!

Oh, where are tears? Who shall give us fit expressions for our sorrow that men should be such monsters to themselves, and to their God? The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master’s crib. But men know not God. The stork knows its fir tree, the wild goat its crag, and the cony knows its cleft, but the sinner knows not his Christ. Ah, Manhood, what has befallen you? What strange wine of Gomorrah have you drank which has thus intoxicated you?

One other thing, I never heard of a stork, that when it met with a fir tree, demurred as to its right to build its nest there. And I never heard of a cony yet that questioned whether it had a permit to run into the rock.

Why, these creatures would soon perish if they were always doubting and fearing as to whether they had a right to use Providential provisions! The stork says to himself, “ah, here is a fir tree.” He consults with his mate—“Will this do for the nest in which we may rear our young?” “Yes” says she, and they gather the materials, and arrange them.

There is never any deliberation about, “May we build here?” They bring their sticks and make their nest. So the wild goat on the crag does not say, “Have I a right to be here?” No! He must be somewhere, and there is a crag which exactly suits him. And he springs upon it. Yet though these dumb creatures know the provision of their God, the sinner does not recognize the provisions of his Savior. He quibbles and questions, “May I?” And, “I am afraid it is not for me,” and, “I think it cannot be meant for me.” And, “I am afraid it is too good to be true.” And yet nobody ever said to the stork, “Whoever builds on this fir tree shall never have his nest pulled down.”

No Inspired Word has ever said to the cony, “Whoever runs into this rock-cleft shall never be driven out of it.” If it had been so, it would make assurance doubly sure. And yet here is Christ, provided for sinners—just the sort of a Savior sinners need, and the encouragement is added, “He that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” “Whoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.”

O dear Brothers and Sisters, do not be standing out against the generosity of a sin-pardoning God who bids the sinner come and welcome. Come, believe in Jesus, and find salvation now. O that you would come, it is what God has provided for your wants. Come, take it, for He bids you come. “The Spirit and the bride say come, and whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.” To believe is to trust Jesus, to trust His suffering, to trust His Atonement, and rely upon Him alone for salvation. May God enable you to do it for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 104.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1259 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THERE GO THE SHIPS  
NO. 1259

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“There go the ships.”  
Psalm 104:26.

I was walking, the other day, by the side of the sea, looking out upon the English Channel. It so happened that there was a bad wind for the vessels going down the Channel and they were lying in great numbers between the shore and the Goodwins. I should think I counted more than a hundred, all waiting for a change of wind. All of a sudden the wind shifted to a more favorable quarter and it was interesting to see with what rapidity all sails were spread and the vessels began to disappear like birds on the wing. It was a sight such as one might not often see, but worth traveling a hundred miles to gaze upon, to see them all sail like a gallant squadron and disappear southward on their voyages. “There go the ships,” was the exclamation that naturally rose to one’s lips.

The Psalmist thought it worth his while to pen the fact which he, too, had noticed, though it is very questionable whether David had ever seen anything like the number of vessels which pass our coasts. Certainly he had seen none to be compared with them for tonnage. The first lesson which may be learned from the ships and the sea is this—every part of the earth is made with some design. The land, of course, yields “grass for the cattle and herb for the service of man.” But what about the broad acres of the sea? We cannot sow them, nor turn them into pasture. The reaper fills not his arms from the briny furrows! They give neither seed for the sower nor bread for the eater, neither do herds of cattle cover them as they do the thousand hills of earth.

Remorselessly swallowing up all that is cast upon it, the thankless ocean makes no return of fruit or flower. Is not the larger part of the world given up to waste? “No,” says David, and so say we—“There go the ships.” The sea benefits man by occasioning navigation and yielding, besides, an enormous harvest of fishes of many kinds. Besides which, as the blood is necessary for the body, so it is necessary for this world that there should be upon its surface a vast mass of water in perpetual motion. That measureless gathering together of the waters is an amazing instance of Divine Wisdom in its existence, its perpetual ebb and flow and even in its form and quantity. In the ocean there is not a drop of water too much nor a drop too little! There is not a single mile of sea more than there ought to be, nor less than there should be.

An exact balance and proportion is maintained and we little know how the blooming of the tiny flower or the flourishing of the majestic cedar would be affected were the balance disturbed. Between the tiny drop of dew upon each blade of grass and the boundless main there is a relation and proportion such as only an infinite mind could have arranged. Remember, also, that the ocean’s freshness tends to promote life and health

among the sons of men. It is good that there is sea, or the land might devour its inhabitants by sickness. God has made nothing in vain. Ignorance gazes on the stormy deep and judges it to be a vast disorder, the mother of confusion and the nurse of storms. But better knowledge teaches us what Revelation had before proclaimed, namely, that in wisdom has the Lord made all things.

But does not the ocean grievously separate lovers and friends? Many a wife thinks of her husband on the far-off Pacific. Many a mother casts an anxious thought towards her sailor boy. And both are half inclined to think it is a mistake to place so vast a portion of the globe as a cruel dividing gulf between loving hearts. Others evidently thought so in years gone by, for among the figurative excellencies of the new earth we are told that there shall be no more sea. But what a mistake it is to think that the sea is a divider—it is the great uniter of the races of men—for, “there go the ships.” It is the highway of nations by which they reach each other far more readily than they could have done had no sea existed and arid deserts or towering mountains had intervened.

This is one instance in which we do not understand God’s designs, for we judge them upon the surface. As the sea apparently divides, but really unites nations, so often in Providence things look one way, but go another. We say, “All these things are against me,” when all things are working together for our good! We judge that to be a curse which, in the deep intent of God, is a rich blessing! And we write that down as among the ills of life which, in God’s esteem, is reckoned to be among its choicest mercies. Judge not according to the sight of the eyes, or the changeful feelings of the heart! But unstaggeringly believe in the Infallible Goodness of our great Father in Heaven!

As the child mistakes God’s design in the sea, so will you also mistake His designs in Providence if you set up yourself as the measurer of the infinite—

*“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His Grace.  
Behind a frowning Providence  
He hides a smiling face.”*

Our subject, however, shall not be the uses of the sea, but this one simple matter—“There go the ships.”

I. And, first, WE SEE THAT THE SHIPS GO. “There go the ships.” The ships are made to go. The ship is not made to lie forever upon the stocks, or to be shut up in the docks. It is generally looked upon as an old hulk of little service when it has to lie up in ordinary and rot in the river. But a ship is made to go, and, as you see that it goes, remember that you also were made to go. Activity in Christian work is the result and design of Grace in the soul. How I wish we could launch some of you!

You are, we trust, converted, but you as yet serve but slender uses. Very quiet, sluggish and motionless, you lie on the stocks by the month together, and we have nearly as much trouble to launch you as Brunel had with the “Great Eastern.” I have tried hard to knock away your blocks, remove your dogshores, and grease your ways, but you need hydraulic rams to stir you! When will you feel that you must go and learn to “walk the water as a thing of life.” O, for a grand launch! Hundreds are lying high and dry and to them I would give the motto, “launch out into the deep.” The ships go, when will you go, too?

The ships, in going, at last disappear from view . The vessel flies before the wind and very speedily it is gone—and such is our destiny before long. Our life is gone as the swift ships. We think ourselves stationary, but we are always moving on. As we sit in these pews so quietly, the angel of time is bearing us between his wings at a speed more rapid than we can guess. Every single tick of the clock is but a vibration of his mighty wings and he bears us on, and on, and on, and never stays to rest either by day or night. Swift as the arrow from the bow we are always speeding towards the target. How short time is! How very short our life is! Let each one say, “How short my life is!”

No man knows how near he is to his grave. Perhaps if he could see it, it is just before him. I almost wish he could see it, for a yawning grave might make some men start to reason and to thought. That yawning grave is there, though they perceive it not—

*“A point of time, a moments space,  
May land me in yon heavenly place,  
Or shut me up in Hell.”*

“There go the ships,” and there go you, also! You are never in one place. You are always flying, swift as the eagle, or, to come back to the text, as the swift ship, yet, “all men think all men mortal but themselves.” The oldest man here probably thinks he will outlive some of the younger ones. The man who is soonest to die may be the very man, of us all, who has the least thought of death! And he that is nearest to his departure is, perhaps, the man who least thinks of it. Just as in the ship all were awake and every man praying to his God except Jonah, for whom the storm was raging, so does it often happen that in a congregation every man may be aroused and made to think of his latter end except the one man, the marked man, who will never see tomorrow’s sun. As you see the ships, think of your mortality!

The ships, as they go, are going on busines s. Some few ships go here and there upon pleasure, but for the most part the ships have something serious to do. They have a charter and they are bound for a certain port. And this teaches us how we should go on the voyage of life with a fixed, earnest, weighty purpose. May I ask each one of you, have you something to do, and is it worth doing? You are sailing, but are you sailing like a mere pleasure yacht, whose port is everywhere, which scuds and flies before every fitful wind and is a mere butterfly with no serious work before it? You may be as heavily laden and dingy as a collier, there may be nothing of beauty or swiftness about you, but after all, the main thing is the practical result of your voyage.

Dear Friend, what are you doing? What have you been doing? And what do you contemplate doing? I should like every young man here just to look at himself. Here you are, young man. You certainly were not sent into this world merely to wear a coat and to stand so many feet in your stockings!

You must have been sent here with some intention. A noble creature like man—and man is a noble creature as compared with the animal creation—is surely made for something. What were you made for? Not merely to enjoy yourself. That cannot be! You certainly are not “a butterfly born in a bower,” neither were you made to be creation’s blot and blank.

Neither can you have been created to do mischief. It were an evil thing for you to be a mere serpent in the world, to creep in the grass and wound the traveler. No, you must be made for something. What is that something? Are you answering your end? We were made for God’s glory. Nothing short of this is worthy of immortal beings! Have we sought that glory? Are we seeking it now? If not, I commend to your consideration this thought, that as the ships go on their business, so ought men to live with a fixed and worthy purpose. I would say this, not only to young men, but with greater earnestness, still, to men who may have wasted 40 years.

O, how could I dare to stand before this congregation tonight and have to say, “Friends, I have had no objective. I have lived in this world for myself, alone. I have had no grand purpose before me”? I should be utterly ashamed if that were the fact. And if any man is obliged to feel that his purpose was such that he dares not acknowledge it, or that he has only existed to make so much money, or gain a position in life, or to enjoy himself, but he has never purposed to serve his God, I would say to him, Wake up, wake up, I pray you, to a noble purpose, worthy of a man! May God, the ever-blessed Spirit, set this before you in the light of eternity and in the light of Jesus’ dying love! And may you be awakened to solemn, earnest purpose and pursuit.

“There go the ships,” but not idly. They go upon business. These ships, however, whatever their errand is, sail upon a changeful sea. Today the sea is smooth like glass. The ship, however, makes very small headway. Tomorrow there is a breeze which fills out the sail and the ship goes merrily before it. Perhaps, before night comes on, the breeze increases to a gale and then rushes from a gale into a hurricane. Let the mariner see to, it when the storm-winds are out, for the ship needs to be staunch to meet the tempest. Mark how in the tempestuous hour the sea mingles with the clouds and the clouds with the sea. See how the ship mounts up to Heaven on the crest of the wave and then dives into the abyss in the furrow between the enormous billows—until the mariners reel to and fro and stagger like drunken men.

Soon they have weathered the storm and, perhaps, tomorrow it will be calm again. “There go the ships” on an element which is a proverb for fickleness, for we say, “false as the smooth, deceitful sea.” “They go,” you say, “upon the sea, but I dwell upon the solid earth.” Ah, good Sir, there is not much to choose. There is nothing stable beneath yon waxing and waning moon. We say “terra firma,” but where, where is terra firma? What man has discovered the immovable rock? Certainly not he who looks to this world for it! He has it not who thinks he has, for many plunge from riches into poverty, from honor to disgrace, from power to servitude.

Who says, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved”? He speaks as the foolish speak! It is a voyage, Sir, and even with Christ on board it is a voyage in which storms will occur! It is a voyage in which you may have to say, “Master, do You not care that we perish?” Expect changes, then. Do not hold anything on earth too firmly. Trust in God and be on the watch, for who knows what may be on the morrow? “There go the ships.”

II. But now, having spoken upon that, our second point is, HOW GO THE SHIPS? What makes them go? For there are lessons here for Christians. We leave our steamships out of the question, as they were not known in David’s day and, therefore, not intended. But

 how go the ships? Well, they must go according to the wind. They cannot make headway without favoring gales. And if our port is Heaven, there is no getting there except by the blessed Spirit’s blowing upon us. He blows where He wishes and we need that He should breathe upon us.

We never steer out of the port of destruction upon our venturesome voyage till the heavenly Wind drives us out to sea. And when we are out upon the ocean of spiritual life we make no progress unless we have His favoring breath. We are dependent upon the Spirit of God even more than the mariners upon the breeze. Let us all know this and, therefore, cry—

*Celestial Breeze, no longer stay,  
But fill my sails and speed my way.”*  
It is not possible to insist too much on the humbling Truth of God, “Without Me you can do nothing.” It helps to check self-confidence and it exalts the Holy Spirit. Unless we honor Him, He will not honor us. Therefore, let us cheerfully acknowledge our absolute dependence upon Him. But still, the mariner does not go by the wind without exertion on his own part, for the sails must be spread and managed so that the wind may be utilized. One man will go many knots, while another with the same breeze goes but few, for there is a good deal of tacking about needed, sometimes, to use the little wind, or the cross wind which may prevail. Sometimes all the sails must be spread, but at other times only a part. Management is required. If some were spread, they might take the wind out of others, and so the ship might lose instead of gaining. There is a deal of work on board a ship. I believe that some people have a notion that the ship goes of itself and that the sailors have nothing to do but sit down and enjoy themselves. But if you have ever been to sea as an able-bodied seaman, you have discovered that for an easy life you must not be one of a ship’s crew! And so, mark you, we are dependent upon the Spirit of God, but He puts us into motion and action. And if Christian men sit down and say, “Oh, the Spirit of God will do the work,” you will find the Spirit of God will do nothing of the sort! The only operation which He will be likely to perform will be to convince you that you are a sluggard and that you will come to poverty. The Spirit of God makes men earnest, fervent, living and intense. He “works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.” We have sails to manage to catch the favoring breeze and we shall need all the strength we can obtain if we are to make good headway in the voyage of life.  
Some professors say, “God will save His own people.” I am afraid He will never save them! They expect there will come good times when a great number of the elect will be gathered in, but they fold their arms and do nothing at all to promote the spread of the Gospel. When they see others a little busy, they say, “Ah, mere excitement!” and so on. They tell us God will have His own, to which I generally reply that I believe He will, but I do not believe He will have them, because if they were His own they would not talk in that fashion, for those who are God’s own people have a zeal for God and a love for souls.  
Do you not remember what God said to David? “When you hear the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees then shall you bestir yourself.” Not, “Then shall you sit still and say ‘God will do it.’” When David heard the angels coming over the tops of the trees to fight the Philistines—when he heard their soft tread among the leaves, like the rustling of the wind—then he was to bestir himself! And so, when God’s Spirit comes to work in the Church, the Christian must bestir himself and not sit still. “There go the ships.” They go with the wind, but they are the scene of great industry, or else the wind would whistle through the yards and the ship would make no voyages. Thus, Brothers and Sisters, we see dependence and energy united—faith sweetly showing itself in good works.  
“There go the ships.” How do they go? Well, they have to be guided and steered by the helm. The helm is a little thing, but yet it rules the vessel. As the helm is turned, so is the vessel guided. Look you well to it, Christian, that your motives and purposes are always right. Your love is the helm of the vessel! Where your affection is, your thoughts and actions tend to be. If you love the world, you will drift with the world! But if the love of the Father is in you, then your vessel will go towards God and towards Divine things! O, see to it that Christ has His hands on the tiller and that He guides you towards the haven of perfect peace!  
The ship being guided by the helm, he who manages the helm seeks direction from charts and lights. “There go the ships,” but they do not go of themselves, without management and wisdom. Thought is exercised and knowledge and experience. There is an eye on deck which at night looks out for yonder revolving light, or the colored ray of the light of the ship just ahead there. And the thoughtful brain says, “I must steer south-west of such a light,” or, “to the north of such a light, or I shall be upon the sands.” Besides mere lookouts upon the sea, that anxious eye also busies itself with the chart, scans the stars and takes observations of the moon. The captain’s mind is exercised to learn exactly where the vessel is and where she is going, lest the good ship unawares should come to mischief. And so, dear Brethren, if we are to get to Heaven, we must study well the Scriptures. We must look well to every warning and guiding light of the Spirit’s kindling and ask for direction from above, for as the ships go not at haphazard, so neither will any Christian his way to Heaven unless he watches and prays and looks up daily, saying, “Guide me in a plain path, O God.” The voyage of a ship on the main ocean seems, to me, to be an admirable picture of the life of faith. The sailor does not see a road before him, or any land mark or sea mark, yet is sure of his course. He relies upon fixed lights in Heaven, for far out he can see no beacon or light on the sea.  
His calculations, based on the laws of the heavenly bodies, are sure guides on a wild wilderness where no keel ever leaves a furrow to mark the way. The Late Captain Basil Hall, one of the most scientific officers in the navy, tells the following interesting incident. He once sailed from San Blas, on the west coast of Mexico. After a voyage of 8,000 miles, occupying 89 days, he arrived off Rio de Janeiro, having in this interval passed through the Pacific Ocean, rounded Cape Horn and crossed the South Atlantic without making land or seeing a single sail except an American whaler. When, within a week’s sail of Rio, he set seriously about, determining by lunar observations, the position of his ship, and then steered his course by those common principles of navigation which may be safely employed for short distances between one known station and another. Having arrived within what he considered, from his computations, 15 or 20 miles of the coast, he hove to, at four o’clock in the morning, to await the break of day, and then bore up, proceeding cautiously, on account of a thick fog. As this cleared away, the crew had the satisfaction of seeing the great Sugar Loaf Rock which stands on one side of the harbor’s mouth, so nearly right ahead, that they had not to alter their course above a point in order to hit the entrance of the port. This was the first land they had seen for nearly three months, after crossing so many seas, and being set backwards and forwards by innumerable currents and foul winds. The effect upon all on board was electric and, giving way to their admiration, the sailors greeted the commander with a hearty cheer. And what a cheer will we give when, after many a year’s sailing by faith, we, at last, see the pearly gates right straight ahead and enter into the fair havens without needing to shift a point! Glory be to the Captain of our salvation! It will be all well with us when the fog of this life’s care shall lift, and we shall see the Light of Heaven!  
Once more, how go the ships? They not only go according to the wind, guided by the helm and the chart, but some ships will go better than others, according to their build. With the same amount of wind one vessel makes more way than another. Now it is a blessed thing when the Grace of God gives a Christian a good build. There are some Church members who are so oddly shaped that somehow they never seem to cut the water! Even the Holy Spirit does not make much of them. They will get into harbor at last, but they will need a world of tugging. The snail did get into the ark—I often wonder how he did it—he must have got up very early that morning! However, the snail got in as well as the greyhound, and so there are many Christian people who will get to Heaven, but Heaven, alone, knows how, for they are such an odd sort of people that they seem to make no progress in the Divine Life. I would sooner live in Heaven with them forever than be with them 15 minutes here below!  
God seems to shape some Christian minds in a more perfect model than others, so that, having simplicity of character, warmth of heart, zealous temperaments and generous spirits, when the wind of the Spirit comes they cut through the foam. Now, I suspect that some good people have, by degrees, become like the “Great Eastern” a short time since, namely, foul under water. They cannot go because they are covered with barnacles. A ship is greatly impeded in its voyage if it carries a quantity of barnacles on her bottom. I know lots of Christian people—I could point them out tonight, but I will not—who are covered with barnacles. They cannot go because of some secret inconsistency, or love of the things of this world rather than the love of God.  
They need laying up and cleaning a bit, so as to get some of the barnacles off. It is a rough process, but it is one to which some of God’s vessels have to be exposed. What headway they would make towards Heaven if that which hinders were removed! Sometimes, when a man is on a bed of sickness he is losing his barnacles and, sometimes, when a man has been rich and wealthy and has lost all he had, it takes off the barnacles. When we have lost friends we love, and whom we have made idols of, we have been sorry to lose them—but it has cleaned off our barnacles. And when we have got out to sea there has been an ease about the going and we have scarcely known how it was, but God knew that He had made us more fit for His service by the trials of life to which He exposed us. That is how the ships go. There are many mysteries about them and there are many in us. God makes us go by the gales of His Spirit. O, that we may be trim for going, buoyant and swift to be moved, and so may we make a grand voyage to Heaven with Christ Jesus at the helm!

 III. Thirdly and briefly. When I saw these ships go I happened to be near a station of Lloyd’s. I noticed that they ran up flags as the vessels went by, to which the vessels replied. I suppose they were asking questions—to know their names and what their cargo was, where they were going, and so on. Now I am going to act as Lloyd’s tonight, and put up the flags and ask you something about yourselves. The third point, then, will be—the ships go, LET US SIGNAL THEM.  
And, first, who is your owner? “There go the ships,” but who is your owner? You do not reply, but I think I can make a guess. There are some hypocrites about who make fine pretensions, but they are not holy-living people! They even dare to come to the Lord’s Table and yet they drink of the cup of devils! They will sing pious hymns with us and then sing lascivious ditties with their friends. I would say to such a man—you are a rotten vessel, you do not belong to King Jesus! Every timber is faithful in His vessels. They are not all what we should like them to be and, as I have said already, they, too, are often covered with barnacles, but still they are all sincere. The Lord builds His vessels with sound timber and unless we are sincere and right, Christ is not our Owner, but Satan is. The painted hypocrite is known through the disguise he wears. There is another vessel over there, a fine vessel, too. Look, she is newly painted and looks spick and span. You can see nothing amiss with her. What white sails, and do you notice the many flags? Take the glass and read the vessel’s name, and you will see in bold letters, “Self-righteousness.” Ah, I know that the owner is not the Lord Jesus Christ, for all the ships that belong to Him carry the red Cross flag and cannot endure the flaunting flag of self-righteousness! All God’s people admit that they must be saved by Sovereign Grace! Anything like righteousness of their own they pump overboard as so much leakage and bilge-water.  
I see another vessel over yonder, with her sails all spread and every bit of her colors flying. There, there, what a blaze she makes! How proud she seems as she scuds over the water. That vessel is “The Pride,” from the port of Self-Conceit, Captain Ignorance. I do not know where she is more often to be seen, but sometimes she crosses this bit of water. I should not wonder if she is in sight here, now, and you may be sure she does not belong to our Lord Jesus. Whether it is pride of money, or person, or rank, or talent, it comes of evil, and Jesus Christ does not own it! You must get rid of all pride if you belong to Him. God grant us to be humble in heart. I could mention some more vessels that I see here tonight, but I will not. I will rather beg each man and woman to ask himself, “Can I put my hand on my heart and say, ‘I am not my own, I am bought with a price?’ Did Jesus buy me with His precious blood and do I acknowledge that there is not a timber, spar, rope, or bolt in me but what belongs to Him?” Blessed be His name, some of us can say there is not a hair of our head or a drop of our blood but what belongs to Him! Yours are we, You Son of David, and all that we have! I hope there are vessels here which are owned by the Lord Jesus Christ. Let them never be ashamed to confess their Owner. A vessel on proper business is never ashamed to answer signals. If there should be a smuggler or pirate in the offing, the crews would not be likely to answer signals. But those who are on honest business are ready to reply. And so, Brothers and Sisters, be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Never show in your actions that you are ashamed of Jesus, but always let the broad flag be flying in whatever waters you are—“Christ is mine, and I am His. For Him I live. His reproach would I bear and His honor would I maintain.” Our next inquiry is, what is your cargo? “There go the ships,” but what do they carry? You cannot tell from looking at them far out at sea, except that you can be pretty sure that some of them do not carry much. Look at that showy brig! You can tell by the look of her that she has not much on board—from the fact of her floating so high it is clear that her cargo is light. Big men, very important individuals, very high-floating people are common, but there is nothing in them! If they had more on board they would not sink deeper in the water. As we said this morning, the more Divine Grace a man has the lower he lies before God.  
Well, Brothers and Sisters, what cargo have you got? I am afraid some of you who lie down in the water are not kept down by any very precious cargo, but I fear you are in ballast. I have gone aboard some Christians. I thought there was a good deal in them, but I have not been able to find it. They have a great deal of trouble and they always tell you about it. There is a good old soul I call in to see sometimes. I begin to converse with her and her conversation is always about rheumatism—nothing else! You cannot get beyond rheumatism. That good Sister is in ballast. There is another friend of mine, a farmer. If you talk with him, it is always about the badness of the times. That Brother is in ballast, too.  
There are many tradesmen who, though they are Christians, cannot be made to talk of anything but the present dullness of business. I wish they could get that ballast out and fill up with something better, for it is not worth carrying! You must have it, sometimes, I suppose, but it is infinitely better to carry a load of praises, prayers, good wishes, holy doctrines, charitable actions and generous encouragements! Some ships, I think, carry a cargo of powder. You cannot go very near them without feeling you are in danger—they are so very apt to misjudge and take offense. I wish that such persons were made to carry a red flag that we might give them a wide berth.  
It is well to be loaded with good things. Young people, study the Word of God. Ask to be taught by experience and, wherever you go, seek to carry the precious commodities which God has made dear to your own soul, that others may be enriched thereby. It is an interesting sight to see those immense ships loaded with passengers for the colonies. I cannot help praying as I look at them, “God grant that no harm may come to them, but may they safely reach their desired haven.” When I look at some of our Brethren whom God is blessing, so that they have a cargo of blessed souls on board, consisting of hundreds who have been brought to Jesus by them, I would to God we had many more!  
Thank God, I have sometimes had my decks crowded with passengers who have, from my ministry, received the Gospel. The Lord has brought them on board, and O, I trust before I die He will give me thousands more who will have to thank God that they heard the Gospel from these lips! May we be emigrant vessels bearing souls away into the Glory Land where the days of their mourning shall be ended! Of course we can only be humble instruments, but still, what honor God puts upon His instruments when He makes use of them for this object. “There go the ships.” Not ships of war are we, with guns to carry death, but missionary vessels carrying tidings of peace and glad news to the utmost ends of the earth! Our last signal asks the question—where go the ships? “Where go the ships? Oh, yes, they went merrily down the Channel the other day, but where are they now? In a year’s time, who will report all the good vessels which just now passed by our coast? I am looking out upon all of you, anxious to know what port you are making for. Some of you are bound for the Port of Peace. Swiftly may the winds convey you over the waters and safely may you voyage under the convoy of the Lord Jesus! I will try and keep pace with you! I hope that you will sail in company with others of my Master’s vessels, but if you have to sail alone over a sea in which you cannot see another sail, may God, the Blessed One, protect and guard you! Bound for the Port of Peace, with Christ on board, insured for Glory, bound for Life Eternal, let us bless the name of the Lord!  
But alas, alas, many ships which bid fair for the desired haven are lost on the rocks! Some soul-destroying sin causes their swift destruction. Others, equally fair to look upon, are lost on the sands. They seemed bound for Heaven, but they were not the Lord’s. The sands are very dangerous, but they are only a mass of little atoms, soft and yielding. Yet as many ships are lost on the sands as on the rocks. Even so, there are ways and habits of evil which are deceptive—there is apparently nothing very bad about them. Nothing heartbreaking, like rocks, but oh, the multitudes of souls that have been sucked in by sandy temptations! Dear Brothers and Sisters, I hope you are not going that way. God grant you Grace to avoid little sins and I am sure you will keep off the rocks of great sin. In any case, may we turn out to be the Lord’s own, and so be kept to the end. Woe unto us if we should prove to be mere adventurers and perish in our presumption!  
Among the ships that go to sea, there are some that founder. One does not know how, but they are never heard of again. They were sighted on such-and-such a day, but we shall never more hear any tidings of them. How is that? I have known some of the members of this Church go down in mid-ocean. I never thought it could have happened, but they have gone! I can only imagine how it was. They seemed seaworthy vessels, but they were doubtless rotten through and through. Oh Brothers and Sisters, may God keep you from foundering, as some do by some mysterious sin which seems as if it clasped the soul and dragged it down to the deeps of Hell! I have known some vessels, too, that have become derelict—waifs and strays upon the sea—men that were the hope of Churches, but who have abandoned themselves to reckless living. They used to worship with the people of God and seemed to be very earnest and zealous. And now, perhaps, at this very moment, they are passing through the gin palace door, or spending this evening in vices which we dare not mention. O, it is dreadful! Many start on their voyage and look as if they were Christ’s own vessels—and yet for some strange, unreasonable reason they give all up. And they will be met with, in years to come, drifting about, rudderless, captainless, crewless, dangerous to others and miserable to themselves. God save you from this!

And you, my Friend, though you have been a member of this Church for 20 years, God save you from despairing and sinning furiously, for there, sometimes, come over men strange moments of insanity in which they reverse the whole of their lives, lay violent hands upon an excellent character and become castaways. The Grace of God will save the truly regenerate from this, but, alas, how many high professors never were regenerate at all?! Where will some of the vessels I see before me go? It is a fine fleet I am looking upon. Brothers and Sisters, I hope all of us will be found in that great harbor in Heaven which can accommodate all His Majesty’s fleet. O, it will be a great day when we all arrive! Will you give me a hail when you get into port? Will you know me?  
I shall be on the lookout for some of you. I cannot help believing that we shall know each other. We have been in rough waters together these 20 years, and we have had some glorious weather, too, have we not? We have seen the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep! I hope we shall keep together till we reach that blessed haven where our fellowship will be eternal! How we will glorify Him who gets us there, even Jesus, the Lord High Admiral of the seas! Christ shall never hear the last of it if I get to Heaven! I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto His name! I remember preaching once, when half of my congregation quarreled with me when I had done preaching, for I had said—  
*“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing  
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign Grace.”*  
As I came downstairs I met one who said, “You will not sing loudest, for I owe more to Grace than you do!” And I found that all the Lord’s people said the same!  
Well, we will have it out when we get to Heaven—we will try this contention among the birds of Paradise and see which of us can sing the most loudly to the praise of Redeeming Grace! Till then let us trust the Lord Jesus and obey His orders, for He is our Captain and it is our duty to do His bidding. But it would be a dreadful supposition—and yet, perhaps, it may be worse than a supposition—that some of you will have to cast anchor forever in the Dead Sea, whose waves are fire, where every vessel is a prison, where every passenger feels a Hell! What must it be like to be in Hell an hour? I wish some of you could think it over. What must it be like to be shut up in despair for one single day!  
If you have a toothache a few minutes, how wretched you are and how anxious to get rid of it! But what must it be to be in Hell even if were for a short time—even it were but for a short time? O, if it came to an end, still would I say, by all the humanities that are in my soul, I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, do not risk the wrath of God! Go not down to the Pit! Pull down that black flag, Man, pull it down and cast off your old owner. Ask Christ to be your Owner! Run up the red flag of the Cross and give yourself to Jesus, for if you do not, your voyage must lead to the gulf of Black Despair where you will suffer forever the result of your sin! God have mercy upon us and may we never have to pass through the Straits of Judgment into the Gulf of Damnation! May it never be said, “There goes one of the ships that the Tabernacle pilot signaled. It is gone to destruction.” May it rather be said of all of us, all in full sail together, as we go towards Heaven, “There go the ships!” Not one of them is drifting to the Gulf of Destruction! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and all is well with you. Reject Him, and all is ill with you. May He, by His Word, enable you to make a right choice tonight, for His Love’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 104.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—551, 686, 656.  
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THE COMMISSARIAT OF THE UNIVERSE  
NO. 3149

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1909.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“What You give them they gather.”  
Psalm 104:28.**

THIS sentence describes the commissariat of creation. The problem is the feeding of the “creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts,” which swarm the sea, the armies of birds which fill the air and the vast hordes of animals which people the dry land! But in this sentence we have the problem solved, “What You give them they gather.” The work is stupendous, but it is done with ease because the Worker is Infinite—if He were not at the head of it, the task would never be accomplished! Blessed be God for the great You of the text! It is every way our sweetest consolation that the personal God is still at work in the world— leviathan in the ocean and the sparrow on the bough may be, alike, glad of this, and we, the children of the great Father, much more!

The notion of modern philosophers appears to be that the world is like a clock which an omnipotent phantom has set going and left to run on, each wheel acting upon its fellow by rigid law or, as a Brother remarked to me, they think the Lord has wound up the universe like a watch and put it under His pillow and gone to sleep! What do you think, Brothers and Sisters—do you find pleasure in a world bereaved of its God? To me, such philosophy is dreary, for my soul pines for an Infinite Love which will give itself to me and receive my love in return. I am orphaned, indeed, if my Maker will not pity me as His child and hear my prayers, compassionate my tears and succor and comfort me! Babes need a mother’s heart as much as her hands. Would you wish to be a child brought up by machinery, washed by a millwheel, rocked by a pendulum, fed from a pipe, dressed by a steel hand and, in fine, committed to the care of a wonderful engine which could do everything except love you? You would miss the eyes which weep with you and smile upon you, the lips which kiss you and speak lovingly to you and the dear countenance which laughs as you are fondled and pressed to a warm bosom. No, I can neither accept a steam engine instead of my mother, nor a set of laws in exchange for my God! There is a God who cares for all His creatures and makes the grass to grow for the cattle and herbs for the service of man. There is a Father to whom we speak and who hears us! One who waters the hills from His chambers and satisfies the earth with the fruit of His works—to whom we may come boldly in every time of need! Because Jehovah lives, the creatures are fed! He gives them their daily food, they gather it and so the work is done.

The general principle of the text is God gives to His creatures, and His creatures gather. That general principle we shall apply to our own case as men and women, for it is as true of us as it is of the fish of the sea and the cattle on the hills. “What You give them they gather.”

I. Our first point is this, WE HAVE ONLY TO GATHER, FOR GOD GIVES.  
In temporal things, God gives us day by day our daily bread, and our business is simply to gather it. In the wilderness, the manna fell outside the camp of Israel—they had not to make the manna, but to go out in the morning and gather it before the sun was hot. Providence has guaranteed to the child of God his necessary food. “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” Our part in the business is to go forth unto our labor and gather it. True, in some cases, necessary food is not gathered without excessive labor but this is occasioned by the injustice of man— not by the arrangements of God. And when true religion shall have fully operated upon all classes of mankind, none shall need to toil like slaves. They shall only need to perform such an amount of labor as shall be healthful and endurable. When no man oppresses his fellow, the work of gathering what God gives will be no hardship, but a wholesome exercise! The sweat of labor will then be a blessed medicine.  
In this light let us view our worldly business. We are to go forth unto our work and our labor until the evening and to expect that bounteous Providence will thus enable us to gather what the Lord, Himself, bestows. And if by this means He gives us food and raiment, we are to be therewith content. If our faith can see the hand of God in it all, it will be sweet to pick up the manna from the ground and eat it with gratitude because it tastes of the place from where it came.  
As to spirituals, the principle is most emphatically true. We have, in the matter of Grace, only to gather what God gives. The natural man thinks that he has to earn Divine favor, that he has to purchase the blessings of Heaven, but he is in grave error—the soul has only to receive that which Jesus freely gives! Mercy is a gift, salvation is a gift, all Covenant blessings are gifts! We need not bring a price in our hands, but come empty-handed and gather what is laid before us, even as the birds gather their food and the cattle on the hills feed on the grass which freely grows for them. This is one of the first principles of the Gospel. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights.” And it is for us by faith to take our omer and fill it with the angels’ food which has fallen all around us, take it into our tent and there feast, even to the fullest! ‘Tis God’s part to give, ‘tis ours to gather. Faith’s sphere is that of the fleece which absorbs the dew, or the pool which is filled with the rain. Believer, this is the rule in all spiritual things! You are to be a diligent gatherer and to strive after high spiritual attainments, but still remember that your heavenly Father knows what you have need of before you ask Him. These superior blessings are His gifts—and the surest way of obtaining them is to come to Him for them and receive them by faith. You have not to pluck Covenant blessings out of a closed hand—you have only to take from the Lord’s open palm what He delights to bestow. For you to be straitened and poor gives no pleasure to Him. Rather will it delight Him to fill you with His favor and to enrich you with all the blessings of His Grace.

If the calm quiet spirit of this thought could enter our minds, how happy we would be! We would then sit down at Jesus’ feet with Mary and leave Martha to fret alone. Tomorrow morning, before many of our eyes are open, the sun will be rising and, as soon as his first beams salute the earth, the birds of every wing will awaken and, seeing the light, they will begin to sing! But where is your breakfast, little bird? Where is the food for today for the nest full of little ones? The birds do not know, neither are they anxious, but they gather the first seed, or crumb, or worm which they find and, continuing to do so all day long, they are satisfied. Yes, and when summer is gone and the long warm days are over, and cold winter sets in, the birds sit and sing on the bare boughs, though frost is on the ground, for they expect that God will give—and all they have to do is to gather! We may learn much from little birds—yes, even from little birds in cages, for if those who keep them should forget to give them seed and water, they must die, must they not? And yet they sing! They have no great store—perhaps not enough to last them another day—but it does not fret them, neither do they cease their music! I believe Luther well translated their song when he said that it meant this— **“Mortal, cease from care and sorrow!  
God provides for the morrow.”**  
II. Secondly, it is certain that WE CAN ONLY GATHER WHAT GOD GIVES. However eager we may be, there is the end of the matter. The most diligent bird shall not be able to gather more than the Lord has given it—neither shall the most avaricious and covetous man! “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He gives His Beloved sleep.” “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain.” What God gives you, you will be able to gather. But if you set about to heap up what your avarice lusts after, no blessing will attend it. What a difference is often seen in two men placed in the same position in life, with the same work to do and very much the same possessions! You see one of them working cheerfully, happy as a king, sweetening his bread with content and joy in the Lord—while the other murmurs and repines, envying those who are richer and filled with harsh thoughts of God. What makes the one happy and the other wretched? Truly, only that the one has the Grace of God to give him contentment and so is full—and the other has a brutish hunger and greed and so, is left to be his own tormentor. As it is with the poor, so is it with the rich—the heart has more to do with making us happy than our possessions have. He whose soul is full of God, faith and contentment, is a truly rich man! The reflection that we can, after all, gather no more than God gives, should make us restful and contented. It teaches us our dependence upon God and tends to lessen our self-confidence, to moderate our desires and to abate our cares.  
Recollect, dear Christian Friends, that the same remark holds good with regard to spirituals as well as temporals. You can only gather what the Lord grants you. Before preaching, I was trying to find food for you all and I began to pray for it because I remembered that I could only gather for you what the Lord my God gave me. If I bring more than that, it will only be chaff of my own and not good winnowed corn from His garner. I often need to think of this, for I have to feed a great multitude with spiritual meat almost every day in the week. Where is the poor minister to get the supply from if the Lord does not bring it to him? He waits, therefore, upon his God with humble faith and prayer, expecting that fit matter will be suggested. You also, dear Friends, can only obtain, when hearing the Word, what the Holy Spirit gives you. You may hear a thousand sermons, but you will gather nothing that will really quicken or feed your souls unless the Lord gives it to you. Unless the Spirit of the Lord puts fullness into the Word, all the hearing in the world will be worth nothing. The Holy Spirit must take of the things of Christ and reveal them to the inner man, or you will be surfeited with mere words, or puffed up with human opinions and nothing more! “What You give them they gather,” and no more.  
So is it when you set out to work for the Lord Jesus Christ among the ungodly. You will win as many souls as God gives you, but no one will be converted by your own power. When we have reason to believe that the Lord has much people in a city, it gives us much comfort in going there. I always do my best for my congregations because I feel that they are always picked persons sent to me by my Master—if there are few, they are more than I can edify if He does not help me. And if there are many, so much the more help will my Lord afford me. I can only gather what the Lord gives. We may plant and we may water, too, but God must give the increase. We shall not be a sweet savor unto God, nor a savor of life unto life to any unless the almighty Spirit of the blessed God shall come forth and work with us.  
Should not this lead us to much prayer? No dependence should be placed upon man, or upon the outward form of worship, for the most successful preacher cannot, by his own power, quicken the dead sinner, or regenerate a depraved soul! The Holy Spirit must be with us, or we prophesy in vain. The most laborious reaper in the Lord’s harvest cannot gather more sheaves than his Master gives him. Pray for him, then, that he may not miss his reward. Pray for him that he may be strong for labor, that his sickle may be sharp, his arm vigorous and his harvest plenteous—that he may bring in a glorious load of sheaves to the garner! As for yourselves, when engaged in any service for God, take heed that you rest not in yourselves, for you can receive nothing unless it is given you from above. Your words will be no better than silence, your thoughts no more than daydreams and your efforts wasted strength unless the Lord shall go before you. “Without Me you can do nothing” is a Truth of God you must never forget!  
III. Observe, thirdly, that WE MUST GATHER WHAT GOD GIVES or else we shall get no good by His bountiful giving.  
God feeds the innumerable creeping things, but each creature collects the provender for itself. The huge leviathan receives his vast provision, but he must go plowing through the boundless meadows and gather up the myriads of minute objects which supply his need. The fish must leap up to catch the fly, the swallow must hawk for its food, the young lions must hunt their prey. “What You give them they gather.” God has not prepared, in His whole universe, a single corner for an idle being. In no society does the sluggard succeed and it is not desirable that he should. If a man will not work, he ought to die, for he is of no use alive—he is in everybody’s way and, like a fruitless tree he cumbers the ground. God gives, but if a man will not gather, he deserves to starve.  
It is so in business. Everybody knows that we must be diligent there, for “the hand of the diligent makes rich.” The Book of Proverbs deals very hard blows against sluggards—and Christian ministers do well to frequently denounce the great sin of idleness which is the mother of a huge family of sins. Idleness is a most contemptible vice—it covers a man with rags, fills him with disease and makes him a ready servant of the devil. It is a shameful thing that God, “who works up to now,” and made us on purpose that we should work, should see us wasting time and strength and leaving good work unaccomplished. God will not feed you, idle man! His own verdict is, “if he will not work, neither let him eat.” If you loaf about and say, “The Lord will provide,” he will probably “provide” you a place in the workhouse, if not in the county jail! If the manna falls near him and the lazy man will not take the trouble to gather it, his omer will not be filled by miracle, neither will an angel be sent to carry bread and meat to his table. Up, you sluggard, and gather what the Lord has strewn!  
The law of Nature and Providence holds good in spiritual things. “What You give them they gather.” There is a spirit abroad in the world—not so powerful now, thank God, as it used to be—which talks a great deal about Grace and Predestination, and therein I rejoice to hear what it has to say. But its inference from those Truths of God is that men are to sit still, to be passive in salvation and to look upon themselves as so many logs—as if they had no will in the matter, and were never to be called to an account concerning the Gospel which they hear! Now, this kind of doctrine virtually teaches that what God gives drops into our mouths and we need not gather it at all—the very reverse of the Savior’s exhortation to labor for that meat which endures unto everlasting life! Sovereign Grace will not take us to Heaven by the hair of our heads, or save us in our sleep, whether we will or not! Such teaching would have been repudiated by the Apostles, for it acts like chloroform upon the conscience and plunges the soul into a deadly lethargy. The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, there is a Predestination and the Doctrines of Election and Effectual Grace are true—nor may we deny them! But yet the Lord deals with men as responsible beings and bids them “strive to enter in at the strait gate,” and to “lay hold on eternal life.” Such exhortations are evidently intended for free agents and indicate that our salvation requires energetic action! It would not appear from Scripture that we are to lie dormant and be merely acted upon, for “the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Of men as well as of birds it is true, “what You give them they gather.” God gives you faith, but you must believe! God gives you repentance, but you must repent! These Divine Graces are the work of God, but they are also the acts of man. How often shall we need to remind you, Brothers and Sisters, that the Holy Spirit does not believe for us? How can He? Is faith to be exercised by proxy? That cannot be! Neither does the Holy Spirit repent for us—it is absurd to entertain such a notion! We must, ourselves, personally believe and repent! If any man does not repent as his own act and deed, his repentance and faith are not such as are spoken of in Scripture, or required by the Gospel! Brothers and Sisters, we should pray, repent and believe as much as if all these were wholly our own, but we are bound to give God all the glory of them, because it is only by His Grace that we either can or will perform them! Men must hear the Word, for “faith comes by hearing.” We must believe the Word, for “without faith it is impossible to please God.” And we must repent of sin, for if sin is not forsaken, pardon is not given. We must fly to the City of Refuge, or the avenger of blood will destroy us! We must escape for our lives to the mountain, or the fire from God will overwhelm us in the City of Destruction. “What You give them they gather.” We

 must gather, or we shall not have!  
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we must not expect spiritual gifts without gathering them. For instance, our souls need food, but we may not expect the Lord to feed us unless we use the means, hear or read His Word, attend to private devotion and the like. These are channels of Grace to us and woe be to us if we neglect them! If you saw your friend so emaciated that you could count his bones—and so weak that he could scarcely stand—you would enquire what had reduced him so much, for he used to be a strong hearty man. You say to him, “My dear Friend, what can be the matter with you?” You expect him to tell you of some mysterious disease. But no, his tale is far more simple—he confesses that he does not eat, that he has given up having regular meals and very seldom takes an ounce of nourishment. You quite understand his feebleness and decline—he is injuring his constitution by denying it nutriment! Now, when a Christian complains that he is full of doubts and fears and has no joy in the Lord as he used to have, and no enjoyment in prayer or labor for Jesus—if you find out that he neglects all week-night services, never goes to the Prayer Meeting, reads anything rather than his Bible and has no time for meditation—you need not enquire further into his spiritual malady! The man does not gather what God provides! He lets the manna lie outside the camp and allows the water from the Rock to flow untasted! And he must not be astonished that his soul is not in a right condition. Christians will find that if they neglect the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is, and if they forget to wait upon the Lord and so renew their strength, they will fall into a miserable, weak, low condition—and their souls will be full of doubts, cares, and anxieties such as they never would have known if they had walked nearer to God and maintained intimate communion with the Savior!  
As it is with ourselves, so is it with us in reference to others. God will give us souls if we pray for them, but we must seek after them. When the Lord calls a man to speak in His name, He intends to give him some success, but he must be on the watch to gather it. Some ministers have preached the Gospel long, but have never seen much fruit because they never tried to gather it—they have had no meetings for enquirers, nor encouraged the young converts to come to them for help. What God has given them, they have not gathered. Many professors are always wishing that the Church would increase—they would like to see an aggressive work carried on against the world—why do they not set about it? Why stand they gazing up into Heaven? Do they expect to see souls converted without means? Dear Brothers and Sisters, it will not do for us to get silly notions into our heads! Up to this day God has been pleased to use instrumentality and until the Second Advent He will continue to do so! When the Lord descends from Heaven, it will be time enough for us to talk of what He will then do—but till He comes, let us continue to gather the souls He gives us. We are not in such great need of conferences about how to win souls as of men who will do it. I vote for less talk and more work! We cannot have too much prayer, but we certainly need more effort. The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward!” We cry, “Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord!” and the Lord replies, “Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion!” God is awake enough—the awaking is needed by us! We have been praying for His Spirit, and rightly enough, but the Spirit of God is never backward—we are straitened in ourselves! He would use us if we were vessels fit for His use. Oh, that we would yield ourselves fully to the Spirit of God, to be borne whichever way He wills, even as the clouds are driven by the wind! Then He would draw and we would run—He would give and we would gather!  
IV. The fourth turn of the text gives us the sweet thought THAT WE MAY GATHER WHAT HE GIVES. We have Divine permission to enjoy freely what the Lord bestows!  
Poor Sinner, whatever the Lord has given in His Gospel to sinners, you may freely gather. When the manna fell in the wilderness, no guards were appointed to keep the people away. No enquiry was made as to the character or experience of those who came to gather it. There it was and no one was denied. Over the heads of the people might have sounded the words, “Whoever will, let him come and take of the manna freely.” Tests and qualifications there were none and yet the special design was the feeding of Israel. No discriminating Rabbi cried out, “You must not come unless you feel a law-work within and are sensible sinners.” Not a word of the sort was whispered! And the Lord has appointed no one to keep sinners away from the Water of Life, but He has chosen many to bid poor souls draw near and drink! And the Holy Spirit, Himself, puts forth His power to draw men to it. Jesus says, “He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” And I, for one, have no commission to discourage any, nor will I. What He gives you, you may gather! The little birds ask no questions as to whether they may enjoy the seeds or the worms—they see the food and take it boldly—so, Sinners, it is not for you to raise difficulties about the mercy of God! Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved and that whoever is a wide word. You need not say, “I do not know whether I am elected.” Neither can I tell you, nor can any other man. “The Lord knows them that are His,” and none of us know anything about it except as far as His Spirit teaches us that we ourselves are His. Your thoughts should run in another direction—Christ Jesus came to save sinners—are you a sinner? “Whoever will, let him come.” Are you willing? Then come along with you and quibble no longer!  
God does not guard His great garden of Grace as men protect their little patches of ground, wherein they hang up old garments or dead crows to keep the birds away. The Lord gives freely and upbraids not. Certain preachers hang up the dead black crow of their own morbid experience to scare away poor sinners from coming to simple faith in Jesus, but the Lord has no scarecrows in His garden! Do but come, you blackest of sinners, and He will receive you. The strangest bird, with speckled wings, may freely gather what mercy gives. Whatever is preached in the Gospel as the object of faith, everyone that believes may have. Whatever is promised to repentance, everyone that repents may have. And whatever is promised to coming to Christ, everyone that comes to Christ shall have. “What You give them they gather,” for God gives it to be gathered! He gave the manna on purpose for it to be eaten! He would not have sent bread from Heaven if men had not needed it and if He had not meant to feed them. Grace must have been meant for sinners—it will suit no other persons. If I have a hard heart, the Spirit of God can soften it—why should He not do so? Here is a foul sinner and yonder is a fountain filled with blood which completely cleanses—why should he not wash? What was Christ meant for but to be a Savior? And if He is a Savior, why should He not save me? Surely, when I am thirsty and I see the water springing up before me, I may as well drink. Sinner, there is a spring open here by the Grace of our Lord Jesus! You have come this way and, therefore, I suggest to you and I pray the Spirit of God also to suggest it to you, that between the fountain and the thirsty soul there ought to be a connection begun at once! God invites you, your need calls you, may His Spirit draw you—for even now what He has given you may gather!  
V. The last thought is, GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE US SOMETHING TO GATHER.  
It is written, “The Lord will provide.” The other day, as I walked on a common, I picked up a dead sparrow. Going a little further, I found another. And my friend said to me, “I have found another.” And he remarked, “It must have been a bad season; these birds must have been starved.” “No, no,” I said, “you are not going to pick up dead sparrows killed by the weather. That cottager over the hedge has some rows of young peas, and he keeps a gun.” Men kill the birds—God does not starve them.

Brother, if you are under the guardian care of God you shall not want. If you are your own shepherd, you will probably stray into very lean pastures one of these days, but if the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not want. He will make you to lie down in green pastures. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger,” for they try to take care of themselves. “But they that seek the Lord,” although they are often very simple-minded people and easily imposed upon, “shall not want any good thing,” for God will take care of them. I have often noticed how wonderfully poor widows manage to live and struggle through with large families. When they were dependent upon their husbands, they were often badly off. And when their husbands died, it seemed as if they must starve! But if they are Christian women, they look to God and God becomes their Husband— and He is a far better Husband than the man they have lost! When God takes the children in hand and becomes their Father, they cannot lack. Help is raised up in unexpected quarters and they are provided for—they can scarcely tell how. If, in Providence, we have learned to live by faith in God, we may be sure that He will not fail us. “The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.”

Thus is it also in spiritual things . If you are willing to gather, God will always give. Go to the Bible and say, “Lord, give me a promise,” and you will find one suitable to your case. Go and hear His servants whom He has sent. Go with hearts ready to receive the Word and you will not return empty. The Lord will make us speak to your case as much as if we knew all about you! Bring your largest vessel with you and the Lord will fill it to the brim. Never does a Believer open his mouth wide but the Lord fills it! Be you ready to gather and you may be right well assured that the Divine fullness will never cease to supply your need!

Thus, from a very simple text, we have had our lesson. Go home and feed upon what you have gathered—and take care to bless the name of the Lord!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 34.**

The title of this Psalm is, “A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech (or, Achish); who drove him away, and he departed.” It relates to a sad scene in David’s life when he had to feign madness in order to escape from his enemies. But I notice that although the fact is recorded, yet David does not dwell upon it in the Psalm. He had acted as a fool or a madman, but he was not fool enough, or mad enough, to glory in his shame! I have heard some men, whose past lives have been very disgraceful, who, after their professed conversion, have seemed to make a boast of their sin. David does not do that, nor will any other right-minded person. Let us always be ashamed of our sin, even while we magnify the Grace of God which has saved us from it. Though we may feel that it is necessary to mention it in order to encourage others to hope in the mercy of God, yet we must take care that we never even seem to dwell upon it with any kind of gusto. Thus the Psalm begins—

Verse 1. I will bless the LORD at all times. “Whether the times are dark or light, whether I feel well or ill, whether the Lord deals with me graciously or severely, I will bless Him at all times.”

1. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. What a blessed mouthful! If we could but carry out this resolve of David, we would not find so much fault with others as we often do. We shall have little or no opportunity for grumbling and murmuring if praise to Jehovah shall continually be in our mouth!

2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD. All men are more or less given to boasting but it seems to be especially characteristic of Englishmen and Americans. Well, there is a right way of boasting. If you can truly say, “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,” you may boast away as much as you like!

2. The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Any other kind of boasting makes humble people sad, but when we boast in the Lord, the more we boast the more the humble rejoice!

3. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. Let each one of us throw his stone upon the mound to make the heap as high as possible, for everyone has some peculiar cause for gratitude and thanksgiving.

4. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. It was a very poor way of seeking the Lord when he had got into the hand of the Philistines and was planning in his own mind a disgraceful way of escaping from them. It was not that calm quiet calling upon God that one would have liked to see in David. Still, God heard him and that makes the deliverance all the more wonderful.

5. They looked unto Him. [See Sermon #195, Volume 4—LOOKING UNTO JESUS— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “All these  
people that have come at my call to join me in praising the Lord—“They looked unto Him.”

5. And were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. No, not one of them! If they looked to God, light shone from God upon their faces and their faces glowed with the holy radiance, so they had no reason to be ashamed.

6, 7. This poor man cried, [See Sermon #2193, Volume 37—A POOR MAN’S CRY—AND WHAT CAME OF IT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them. David’s deliverance had been so special that he could not help feeling that some special deliverer had been employed on his behalf—“the angel of the Lord” had been sent to his help. Then David, why did you act like a madman? Ah, that was through his lack of faith, yet even lack of faith must not make us rob God of His Glory. What though we were unbelieving, He was faithful! Therefore let us give Him His due recompense of praise. Let us try to blot out the remembrance of our own weakness with our tears, but let us not erase the memory of God’s loving kindness to us.

8. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him. You may not only believe that God is good, but it may become a matter of experience with you—“O taste and see that the Lord is good.” You cannot see the goodness of God to perfection without tasting it, so use the sense of taste as well as that of sight! Some people want first to see, and then to taste, but David says, “Taste and see.”

9, 10. O fear the LORD, you His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack. They are strong, cunning, ravenous, yet they “do lack.”

10. And suffer hunger. They try to take care of themselves and, therefore, they get badly taken care of.  
10. But they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. [See Ser

mon #65, Volume 2—LIONS LACKING—BUT THE CHILDREN SATISFIED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] When God takes care of us, we

are well taken care of, though we are not lions, but sheep—for we have a Shepherd, and the lions have not—so we “shall not want any good thing.” 11. Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. I should not wonder but that when David played the madman and scribbled on the doors of the gate, the children in the streets gathered around him and mocked him. Wherever we have done harm to any, let us try to do them good. So did David—he sought to gather the children

about his knees and to talk to them—“Come, you children.” He does not begin by saying, “Stand off, you children.” There would be no teaching them in that way! You must seek to draw them to yourselves if you would draw them to your Lord. “Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” Though David had been anointed king, he remained a teacher of children! And the highest honor we can have is, for Christ’s sake, to teach the little ones. Children love bright, happy teaching—they naturally desire life and happiness—so David begins.

12, 13. What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Children’s tongues are very active and they need to be reminded that their tongues must be sanctified or they will say what is evil. David had both spoken and acted with guile at the court of Achish, so he particularly dwelt upon that matter. “Depart from evil”—run away from it— not merely do not do it, but get away from it! “Depart from evil, and do good.”

14. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous. He does not merely give a glance at them now and then, but His eyes rest on them. He is always watching them.

15. And His ears are open unto their cry. The translators put in the words, “are open,” but they were not needed.  
16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil. You know what we mean when we say, “I set my face against it.” So God sets His face against the wicked. Note how near both the righteous and the wicked are to an observing God. In the first case, His eyes are upon the righteous. In the second, His face “is against them that do evil.”  
16. To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. He will stamp them out as men do with fire. He will not even let them be remembered— He will use means to ensure that their unholy example shall die with them.  
17. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. That is something to teach the children—teach them from your own experience that God does hear and answer prayer. Teach them to always pray to God and to believe that prayer has real and beneficial results! “The Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.”  
18. The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit. We often hear of people who die of a broken heart, but here we read about people who live with a broken heart. And it is the best way of living, too—with a heart that is broken for sin and broken from sin—a heart that in every portion of it feels the power of God!  
19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Do not tell the children that the good are always happy and that the good escape trial, because you will deceive them if you do. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous”—the happiness, the glory, the Heaven of the righteous is not here, but hereafter! “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.”  
19. But. Blessed, “but.”  
19. The LORD delivers him out of them all. Not only out of some of them, but “out of them all.” The righteous do not get out of them by their own power, but the Lord delivers them—they have a Divine Helper!  
20. He keeps all his bones. Not one of them is broken. The righteous may have skin wounds and flesh wounds, but they shall not suffer any real hurt. God will not let His people be so injured as to be incapable of holiness. There shall be no bone-breaking in Christ’s mystical body, even as not one of the bones of Christ was broken!  
21. Evil shall slay the wicked. Sin itself shall slaughter them.  
21, 22. And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.

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**“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
Psalm 104:34.**

THOSE OF YOU who were present this morning know that, with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, I pleaded with men that they would come to Christ. [Sermon # 1951, Volume 33—

The Pleading of the Last Messenger—Read/download entire sermon at http://www.spurgeongems.org . ] If ever in my life I felt that I had spent every particle of my strength, I felt it when I had finished that discourse. I could have wished to die and end my ministry, with the testimony that I bore this morning. I know not in what way I could have more completely poured out my whole being in earnest desire for the conversion of my fellow men. I thought that it would not be possible for me to handle another subject in anything like the same fashion, tonight—I did not feel that I could do so. I said to myself, therefore, “Instead of preaching, instead of having anything to do that will cost much effort and cause much mental strain, I will just be one among the people and enjoy myself as a member of the congregation.

I will have a subject upon which we can all calmly think—I mean, all of us who know the Lord”—and it seemed to me as if nothing could be more fitting than to think of Him who is the joy of our heart, to meditate upon Him who is the strength of our spirit, even our blessed Lord, of whom the text says, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” So, then, I am not going to preach at this time—I am just going to lead your meditations a little, myself meditating while you meditate, being a sort of a leader to pitch the tune in which, I trust, all who love the Lord will heartily join. May God the Holy Spirit help us all sweetly to meditate upon Him of whom the Psalmist here speaks!

This 104th Psalm is a very wonderful one. Humboldt wrote a book which he called, Cosmos, that is, the world, and this Psalm is a Cosmos—it is a world set on fire with praise! It is all creation, from the mountain’s summit down to the brooks that sparkle through the valleys praising God! I have frequently read this Psalm through in the woods and on the mountainside and, when we have come home from an excursion in the Italian mountains, I have said to my companions, “Now we will read the 104th Psalm.” It is the naturalist’s Psalm! It is the Psalm of nature viewed by the eye of faith and he that learns to look aright on seas and mountains, on beasts and birds, on sun and moon and stars, sees God in all things and says with the Psalmist, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
But, Beloved, redemption is a choicer theme for meditation than creation is, for its wonders are far greater! I can understand that God should make the worlds, but that He should redeem men from eternal ruin, I cannot understand. The Creator fashioning all things by the Word of His power is nothing like so remarkable an object of meditation as that same Creator, veiled in human flesh, yielding His hands to the nails of the Cross and bowing His head beneath the stroke of death! If creation is marvelous, redemption is a more sublime miracle, a wonder in the very center of all wonders!

Nor is the theme of redemption less vast than that of creation. Truly, nature is a very wide theme, from the almost infinite greatness which is discovered through the telescope to the wonderful minuteness which is perceived through the microscope. Nature seems to have no boundaries, yet it is a mere fragment compared with redemption, where everything is infinite, where you have to deal with sin and love, life and death, eternity and Heaven and Hell, God and man—and the Son of God made flesh for man’s sake! Now you are among the sublimities, indeed, meditating upon redemption—your theme is vast beyond conception!

And let me add that the theme of redemption is quite as fresh as that of nature. Nature, it is true, never grows stale—from the first day of the year till the last, it is always young! Did you ever see the ocean look twice the same? Did you ever gaze upon the face of nature without always perceiving some fresh beauty? And it is just the same with redemption. The Cross never grows old! The doctrine of Christ Crucified is a spring that wells up forever with a sparkling freshness! Not even the eternal ages shall exhaust it—when untold myriads of years have passed away, this old, old story of the Cross will still be new!

There is this much more to say about a meditation upon redemption, that it comes closely home to us. I like to think of the stars, but, after all, I can be happy if the stars are quenched. I delight to think of the rolling ocean, but still, I could rejoice if there were no more sea. But in redemption we have a vital and personal interest—we could not live as we now live, in the sight of God we could not truly live at all—if we had not been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The seas and the starry worlds are not ours as blessedly as Christ is ours and none of them can bring medicine to the heart and joy to the spirit as does Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us. So I think I may say, however excellent the naturalist’s meditations are, and the more of right meditation upon nature the better—and I wish that we were all learned after the order of true science, which deals with nature itself, and not with theories—yet, if you know little about these things in which some take so deep an interest, your meditations of God may be exceedingly sweet! If you stay within the boundaries of redemption through Jesus Christ, which are by no means narrow, you may say, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

So, first, I shall talk about the sweet—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” Then I shall speak of the sweet as a sweetener, for it is not only sweet in itself, but it imparts sweetness—such sweetness as we need amid the many bitters of this mortal life.

I. First, then, let us talk about THE SWEET—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” “Of Him”—that is, of the Well-Beloved of the Father, of the Well-Beloved of the Church, of the Well-Beloved of my own soul—of Him who loved me, in whose blood I have washed my robes and made them white. It is meditation “of Him” that is sweet—not merely of doctrine about Him, but of Him, of Himself—“my meditation of Him.” Not merely of His offices, and His work, and all that concerns Him, but of His own dear Self! There lies the sweetness and the closer we come to His blessed Person, the more truly have we approached the very center of bliss!

Then it is “ meditation of Him” that makes the sweetness! Brothers and Sisters, it is very delightful to hear about our Lord. I am sure that I have often been charmed when I have heard what others have had to say about Him. My hearing of Him is very sweet, but it does not say that in our text. It is, “my meditation of Him.” When I hear over and over, again, in the echoes of my heart, what I have heard with my ears. When, like the cattle, having cropped the luscious food, I lie down, as they do, to ruminate and chew the cud, “my meditation of Him shall be sweet.” To think over, again, what I have already thought of. To turn over and over in my soul Truths of God with which I am happily familiar, which I have tasted and handled many times—just to taste and handle them, again— in doing so, “my meditation of Him shall be sweet.” The more we know of Christ, the more we want to know of Him! And the more sweet Christ is to us, already, the more sweet He will be! We can never exhaust this gold mine—it gets richer, the deeper we dig into it. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” I will not ask for the glowing periods of the orator. I will not wish for the profundities of the theologian. I will just sit down, humble as my mind may be, and think of what I have heard and known, and especially of all I have experienced of my Lord. And “my meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

But let me dwell a minute on that first word—“ My meditation of Him shall be sweet,” Not another man’s meditation, which is afterwards related to me, but my own meditation of Him shall be sweet! Let me say, concerning the wine of communion with Christ, that it is never so sweet to a man as when he treads the grapes out himself—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” You get a text and beat out its meaning, “working your passage,” as we say, into the very soul of it. Then you will understand it and you will also enjoy it! Make meditation of Christ to be your own personal act and deed! Grasp Him for yourself and hold Him by the feet! Put your own finger into the prints of the nails and, out of your own heart’s experience cry, “My Lord and my God!” Then you shall not need that I tell you how sweet such a meditation is, for you will be able to say for yourself, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

It does not matter, my dear Friend, who you are, if you do but belong to Christ, your meditation of Him shall be sweet! You are a very poor and illiterate person, perhaps, but, if you know Him, it shall be sweet to you to meditate upon Him. Or, it may be you are a man of large reading and of wide knowledge. But I am quite sure that there is not in all the range of your reading, anything for sweetness comparable to Him! The science of Christ Crucified leads the van of all the sciences! This is the most excellent of all knowledge—compared with which every other knowledge is but ignorance dressed in its best! “My meditation of Him shall be sweet”—even mine as I stand here in the midst of you—and yours as you sit in those pews. And as you come presently to this Table of Communion, I hope each one who meditates on Christ will be able to say, “my meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

Now let us meditate on Him for a few minutes and, first, meditate upon His Person. This Blessed One, who is verily among us tonight, is God and Man. Meditate upon His Manhood. He is of a Nature like your own. Sin, alone, excepted, He is a Man as you are. Think of it and rejoice that He has so intense a sympathy with you and that you can have so intense a sympathy with Him! He is your Brother, though He is also the Prince of the kings of the earth! He is your Husband, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, though He is also “over all, God blessed forever.” Do not our hearts begin at once to warm towards the Man, Christ Jesus—in all our afflictions, afflicted, in all our griefs a partaker—and shall not our meditation of Him be sweet?

But then He is also God, and, as God, He has all dominion and authority in Heaven and on earth. Think, then, how near He has brought us to the Godhead! There is now no division between a believing man and God—the Christ has bridged the chasm between the Creator and the creature! One might have thought that this gulf could never have been bridged. Between an angry God and a sinner, reconciliation may be made, but between a Creator and His creature, what link of union can there be? There could have been none if Christ had not become Incarnate! If God had not taken Manhood into union with Himself, we could never have been brought so near to God as we now are. Angels, you may stand back! You can never come so near the Throne of God as man has come, for he was made a little lower than the angels, but now, in the Person of Christ, He is set in the place of dominion and honor, and made to be master over all the works of God’s hands! My meditation upon the Divine Person of my blessed Master shall be sweet, shall it not? I do but indicate a long vista of delight, as it were. I open the gate, and say, “Go in there, Friend. You shall find good food for meditation that way.”

Now let us meditate upon our Lord’s life, for this meditation shall also be sweet. Suppose I take the four Gospels and read the story of my blessed Master’s existence here among men? Well, it needs meditating on, for that life is much more than the Evangelists could write. The life of Christ has a wonderful depth in it! The other day I was reading aloud the first chapter of Luke’s Gospel and trying to expound it. And when I came to the close of my meditation, I said to myself, “If I were shut up to that one chapter for a whole lifetime, I could never expound all its depths.” That simple life of Christ, from Nazareth to Golgotha, is a life of fathomless deeps! And the more you shall meditate upon it, the more sweetness shall you find in it. Oh, to think of His fellowship with me if I am poor, for He hungered! His fellowship with me if I am weary, for He, “being weary, sat thus on the well”! His fellowship with me if I have to stand foot to foot with the old enemy, to contend, even, for my life! His fellowship with me if I lie in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, and have to cry, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”

Read by the eye of faith, the whole story of the life of Christ is full of sweetness to the meditative mind, for remember that as He contended, He became a conqueror! And in this, too, we shall be like He, for we shall overcome through His blood! Faith in Him will give us the victory—we shall tread Satan under our feet before the battle is finished, even as He has done! My meditation of His woes, coupled with my meditation of His ultimate joys shall be exceedingly sweet as a prophecy that, if I stoop, I, too, shall conquer—and though I am cast down, yet shall my casting down be but the means of lifting me up!

Now, here is another road for your thoughts to travel. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet,” especially when I meditate on His death. The death of our Lord and Master should be the habitual theme of the meditation of God’s people. I am afraid, in these days, we do not think enough of the Cross and passion of our Divine Redeemer. I read, in the “modern thought” papers and reviews, sneers about our “sensuous” hymns when we sing about our Lord upon the Cross—they would have us not talk about His blood! Those expressions are “out of date.” It is “mediaeval,” (I think that is the word), to set forth a dying Christ, they say! Now, mark you, the strength of the Church of Rome over many minds has, for centuries, lain in the fact that she keeps prominent the facts of our Lord’s passion and death. Perverted as that truth about His Cross often is, yet it has salvation in it—and I doubt not that many find their way to eternal life, even in that apostate Church, by the fact that Christ Crucified is made to be a great reality!

If it ever comes to pass among us who are called Protestants, and those who are called Protestant Dissenters, that the great fact of the death of Christ is to be regarded as a kind of myth, out of which certain obscure doctrines may be fetched, but which is not, itself, to be spoken of, we shall have cut the Achilles tendon of our strength and our power to bless the sons of men will have departed! Oh, give me the story of the Cross, the veritable story! Yes, let my eyes behold the wounds of Jesus as I stand and bow before the Crucified! His death was a literal fact—no phantom dream—and so would we hold it! And we would meditate upon it as the center of all our hopes. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet,” is especially true of Christ on Calvary’s Cross. Here I see Atonement completed, satisfaction rendered, justice honored, Grace expounded, love struggling, bleeding, contending, conquering! In the actual death of Christ upon the Cross I see the safety of His elect whom He has purchased with His precious blood! I see here the ending of the reign of evil, the bruising of the old serpent’s head. I see the great rock on which the kingdom of God is established upon a sure foundation sealed with the blood of Christ. Oh, go and live on Calvary, you saints! No better air is to be found beneath the cope of Heaven and, as you linger there, your meditation on your Lord shall be sweet!

But what am I saying? For wherever I contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ, “my meditation of Him shall be sweet.” Follow Him in His Resurrection. Behold Him in His present Glory—meditate much upon His intercession at the right hand of God. How secure are we because He always lives to intercede for us! What prophecies of good things to come are hidden away in the Person of our great High Priest before the Throne of God.

Think, too, of the glory yet to be revealed. “Behold, He comes.” Every hour is bringing Him nearer! We shall see Him in that Day and though we may fall asleep before He comes, yet at His coming He shall raise our bodies from the dust and, in our flesh we shall see God! Let us meditate much upon the glories of Christ’s Second Advent, the transcendent splendors of our Divine Conqueror, the background of His sufferings only making His triumphs to shine the more brightly! Meditate upon these things—give your minds wholly to them—then shall you prove the sweetness which dwells in them all.

If you, who are children of God, do not feel that you could traverse any of these paths, I want you to seek to get sweetness out of this thought, “HE loves me.” Say to yourself, Believer, “If there is never another one in Heaven or on earth that loves me, yet Jesus loves me. Jesus loves me! It is well-nigh inconceivable, yet is it true.”

II. Now let us turn to the second part of the subject, THE SWEET AS A SWEETENER—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet,”  
That is to say, first, it shall sweeten all my other sweetnesses. I commend to you who are happy, to you who are full of joy, this blessed method of securing to yourselves a continuance of that happiness and in such a manner as to prevent its spoiling. If you have honey and your hands are full of it, be cautious how you eat it, for you may eat honey till you are sick of it! But if you have a great store of honey, put something sweeter than honey with it, and then it will not harm you. I mean, if God has given you joy in your youth, if you are prospered in business, if your house is full of happiness, if your children sing about you knee, if you have health and wealth, and your spirit dances with joy—all this, by itself, may curdle and spoil. Add to it a sweet meditation of your Lord and all will be well, for it is safe to enjoy temporal things when we enjoy eternal things more! If you will put Christ upon the throne to rule over these good things of yours, then all shall be well. But if you dethrone Him to set these things up—then they become idols—and “the idols He shall utterly abolish.” If you are truly His, you shall have great sorrow in the falling of your Dagons, but it shall surely come to pass. O cheerful, happy, joyous people, I wish there were more of you! I am not condemning your joy—I would partake in it—but let the uppermost joy you have always be “Jesus Christ, Himself.” If the occasion of joy is your marriage, ask Him to the wedding, for He will turn the water into wine! If it is your prosperity, ask Him to the harvest festival and He will bless your storehouse and your barn, and make your mercies to be real blessings to you!  
But, dear Friends, I need not say much about this point, because, at least to some of us, our very sweet days are not very long or very many. The comfort is that this sweetness can sweeten all our bitters. There was never yet a bitter in the cup of life but what a meditation upon Christ would overcome that bitterness and turn it into sweetness! I will suppose that you are, at this time, undergoing personal trials of a temporal kind. There are a great many cures for the cares of this life which philosophy would suggest, but I suggest none of them to you—I prescribe meditation upon Christ! I have already given your many hints how the sorrows, the struggles and the conquests of the life of Christ may help to sweeten all your conflicts and your struggles. Half an hour’s communion with the Lord Jesus will take away the keenness of all your anxieties. Enter into your chamber, shut the door and begin to speak with the Man of Sorrows, and your own sorrows will soon be relieved. If you are poor, get to Him who had not where to lay His head and you will even seem to be rich as you come back to your place in the world! Have you been despised and rejected? Do but look on Him on whom men spat, whom they cast out, saying that it was not fit that He should live—and you will feel as if you never had true honor except when you were, for Christ’s sake, despised and dishonored! You will almost feel as if it was too great an honor for you to have been contemned for His dear sake, who bore the shame and the spitting and the cruel Cross for your sake. Yes, the best sweetener of all temporal troubles is a meditation upon Christ Jesus our Lord!

So is it with all the troubles that come of your Christian work and service. I do not know how it is with any of my fellow workers, here, but I can say this, my work has about it a joy that angels might envy, but, at the same time, it has also a sorrow which I would not wish any to know if it stood by itself. To preach Christ, oh, what bliss it is! To tell of my Master’s sweet love and of His power to save the guilty, I would be content to stay out of Heaven for seven ages if I might always be permitted to do nothing else but preach Christ to perishing sinners! But there is the heartbreak which comes with it, often, in preparing to preach, lest haply one should not take the right subject, or should not have one’s heart in a right condition for the handling of it.  
Add to that the anxieties that creep over one occupying such a position as mine. Standing where I stand tonight and remembering many sorrowful histories, many disappointed hopes concerning the condition of many now before me, I go home, sometimes, wishing that I could creep into my bed and never come out of it again because of my terrible anguish over some of you who will, I fear, be eternally lost! As surely as you are here, you will be lost unless you turn to Christ! Nothing seems as if it could save you—entreaties, invitations, warnings, prayers—all are in vain! You are still without God and without Christ—and if you remain so, you will be lost—and we cannot bear the thought of it! We cannot endure to think that we should preach, and warn, and entreat, and invite and yet that it should all end in nothing except that we should look from the right hand of the Great Judge and spy you out among those to whom He will say, “Depart from Me, you cursed!”  
Truly, there is an awful heartbreak that comes to us when we think of these things! And when we see some, who did run well, turning aside. Some who held the Truth of God, decrying and denying that Truth. Some who once preached it, beginning to preach up the fancies of the age instead of the Gospel of all the ages, then our heart is, indeed, heavy! But what then? “My meditation of Him shall be sweet!” He is still the same God over all, blessed forevermore. He is still exalted a Prince and a Savior. Jesus will surely save His own and He will overthrow all His adversaries, for, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth.” After all is said and done, there is no dishonor possible to Him! It is true that “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross,” but finish the quotation, “Why God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name” (or, “in the name”) “of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” So, my meditation of Him, even amid the anxieties of Christian service, shall be exceedingly sweet!  
Yes, Beloved, and it is just the same when you come to the anxieties concerning your own spiritual condition. I suppose that the very good, “perfect” people we sometimes meet with, or hear of, never get into the state I sometimes get into, but I believe that many of you feel, at times, cast down and troubled about your own spiritual state. Whether men laugh at it or not, I know that many a child of God beside John Newton has had to say—  
*“‘Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Do I love the Lord or no?  
Am I His, or am I not?”*  
I venture to say that as this was the question which the Lord, Himself, put to Peter, it is, therefore, not a wrong question for us to ask ourselves. When darkness veils the skies and the spirit sinks, and a sense of sin is more prevalent than the realization of Divine Grace, then it is bitterness, indeed! And at such a time, the very best sweetener of the waters of Marah is to think of Christ—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” A sinner’s Savior— oh, how sweet He is to such a sinner as I! A Savior for those that have no strength—what a precious Savior He is to a weak one like myself! A Savior who, though we believe not as we ought, still abides faithful—what a dear Savior He is to a half-believing one who has to cry, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief!”  
Let me give you a little piece of advice—do not think of yourself, but think of your Lord! Or, if you must think of yourself, for every time you give an eye to self, give twice that time to Christ! Then shall your meditation of Him be sweet.  
Thus, dear Friends, as long as we live, and when we come to die, our meditation of Him shall be sweet! I would not have you fear the bitterness of death, any of you, if you are trusting in Jesus. God has a wonderful power of strengthening our souls when our bodies grow very weak and feeble. I am quite sure that some of my dear Friends were never before in such a condition in all their lives as I have seen them in when they have evidently been marked for death. The messenger has come, and, as John Bunyan puts it, has brought some timely “token” to warn the spirit that, in a very short time, it is to appear among the shining ones at the right hand of God. I have seen, just then, the spirit of the timid grow strangely brave and the spirit of the questioning grow singularly assured! The Lord has manifested Himself in an unusually gracious way to the poor fluttering heart. Just as the dove was about to take its last long flight, it seemed to have its eyes strengthened to see the place to which it must fly—and all timidity was gone forever. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
When I lie dying, when heart and flesh are failing me, when I shall have little else to think of but my Lord and the eternal state, then shall thoughts of Him pull up the floodgates of the river of bliss and let the very joy of Heaven into my heart! And, by His Grace, I shall be eager to be up and away! I shall not dread the pains, and groans, and dying strife of which some talk so much—but the sweetness of “my meditation of Him” shall make me forget even the bitterness of death, itself!  
I have done when I have just given you one more thought. Our text might be read thus, “My meditation shall be sweet to Him.” We are going to uncover the Table of Communion directly. You will have nothing to think of but the body and the blood of Him by whose death you live. That meditation will, I trust, be very sweet to you, but this fact ought to help to make it so—that it will be “sweet to Him.” Jesus loves you to love Him—and He loves you to think of Him! I know what you have said, sometimes. I remember a Christian woman saying to me, “I have often wished that I could preach, Sir. I have often wished that I had but been a man that I might constantly preach the Gospel.” I do not wonder, I should marvel, indeed, if a good many Christian people did not say, “I wish that I could be a missionary,” or, “I wish that I could be a poetess, like Miss Havergal, and sweetly sing of Christ.” Perhaps you cannot do any of those things, but you can meditate on Christ, can you not? And your meditation on Him shall be sweet to Him! He will delight in your delighting in Him!  
“Oh, but I am a nobody,” says one. “I am nothing.” I tell even you that your meditation of Christ, though it seems not to go very deep, though you cannot, perhaps, keep your thoughts together, well—yet that heart meditation of yours, which longs to meditate on your Lord and craves to know more of Him—is very sweet to Him. Why, you fathers and mothers, you know how it is with those little ones of yours—and especially that first little one that just begins to talk! It has said nothing but nonsense at present, yet you respect the little words, do you not? It is a wonderful speech that little boy of yours made—but why do you think so much of your child’s little thoughts and expressions? Is it not because he is your child that you value his words so much?  
Well now, you belong to Christ and because you belong to Him, He accepts your meditations because He accepts you! And He takes a delight even in those poor broken perplexed thoughts of yours! He knows that if you could sing like the seraphim, you would do so. If you could serve Him as the angels do, you would. Well, if you cannot do that, you can at least meditate on Christ—and your meditation of Him shall be sweet to Him. Oh, then, give Him much of it, and God bless you, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 104.**

I trust that we have already felt something of holy enjoyment while our hearts and voices have been praising the Lord our God. Perhaps this Psalm may help to keep us in a praising state of mind. First of all, David sang of the majesty of God in His works. Then it seems as if the spirit of praise within him became like a strong-winged angel and, mounting into the sky, he began to soar aloft over the varied landscapes of the world until the sun went down. And even then, he continued moving along through the darkness till the sun arose again and found him still praising his God! We will note, as we read the Psalm, this strange, mysterious flight of the spirit of praise.

Verse 1. Bless the LORD, O my Soul. There is the keynote. Strike it, my Brothers and Sisters, each one of you!  
1-3. O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with honor and majesty. Who covers Yourself with light as with a garment: who stretches out the heavens like a curtain: who lays the beams of His chambers in the waters. Or, as we may read it from the Hebrew, “who makes His halls in the waters,” those mysterious waters above the firmament are here pictured as being the cool, retired dwelling place of the majestic Deity.  
3. Who makes the clouds His chariot: who walks upon the wings of the wind. A masterly picture, as if the Lord stood erect upon the two wings of the wind and, as if the wind, like a mighty spirit, went flying round the world with the great Jehovah standing upon its wings, and so riding along!

4, 5. Who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. Now comes a very graphic description of Noah’s flood.  
6. You covered it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. What a splendid act of Divine Energy, when the waters which, before, like tamed lions, slept in their dens, came hungry and fierce and swallowed up the whole earth!  
7, 8. At Your rebuke they fled; at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which You founded for them. At the sound of God’s voice, those mighty deeps went back in a great hurricane. Anyone who has seen water when it is traveling at a great rate, lashed with tempests, will have seen it tossed as into mountains and then having huge holes like vast valleys in it, so, the waters rose up like mountains and fell down like valleys till they found the channels of the deep which God had found for them.  
9. You have set a boundary that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. Jehovah puts the bit of sand into the mouth of the sea and it comes no farther than its appointed boundaries. Now you must suppose the Psalmist is leaving the crowded streets and the dingy, dusty, smoky haunts of men and flying, on the wings of his gratitude and praise, away into the quiet of the fertile country.  
10-12. He sends the springs into the valleys which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the Heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. I know of no place that seems to bring out one’s joy and praise better than when standing by the side of some rippling brook that tumbles down the fissure among the rocks and, seeing the animals come to drink, and hearing the birds blithely sing among the branches, or hang over and dip into the very stream! Even the reading of this Psalm may be like a cool and refreshing breeze to you at this time— and your soul may, in imagination, fly away with David, as you also praise and bless your God!

13. He waters the hills from His chambers. From those watery halls above the firmament He pours down the showers.  
13-15. The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that makes glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man’s heart. The spirit of praise is flying over the fields plowed and tilled by man, over the fruitful vineyards red with clusters of grapes and over the olive gardens and other places where man’s handiwork has made the earth fertile. Now the Psalmist mounts still higher and gets into the forests.  
16, 17. The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which He has planted; where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. Flying along over the tops of the trees, he looks down among them and he notices the beasts as well as the birds  
18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies. So that there is not any part of the earth which is not full of God’s goodness! Even the rocks, which yield nothing to the plow, furnish a refuge for the conies, and the high hills are a home for the wild goats, while the fertile earth beneath makes man’s heart glad. As the spirit of praise flies over the tops of the mountains, the sun goes down. The Psalmist witnesses that grand sight, an Eastern sunset.  
19, 20. He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knows his going down. You make darkness, and it is night. Will he now cease from his song? No, for God does not cease to work!  
20, 21. Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. So that even night has its mysterious music and the roaring of the young lions is a tribute to the Providence of the good God who cares even for the beasts that perish!  
22. The sun arises, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. You see, the Psalmist does not cease his praise, but finds a theme for music even in the rest of the beasts.  
23, 24. Man goes forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom have you made them all: the earth is full of Your riches. The Psalmist has made a long journey, flying along just where he could see everything upon the face of the earth, but he thinks to himself that he has not seen the half of God’s works, yet, for yonder is the Mediterranean, glistening in the morning sunbeams, so he takes another flight.  
25, 26. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships. That is, above the water—while in it—  
26. There is that leviathan, whom You have made to play therein. Some mighty fish leaps out of the sea. The Psalmist’s eye catches a glimpse of it and he puts even that monster into his hymn of praise!  
27. These wait all upon You, that You may give them their meat in due season. My Brothers and Sisters, what an idea we have, here, of God thus supplying all the creatures of the earth and the sea! They are all waiting upon Him—they can go to no other storehouse but His—no other granary can supply their needs! Surely, we need not be afraid that He will fail us. It He feeds leviathan, with his great needs, and the many birds with their little needs, He will not forget His children! He will never withhold any real good from them that walk uprightly.  
28. What You give them they gather: You open Your hand, they are filled with good. That is all He has to do, you see, just open His hand. If that hand were once fast closed, they would all die, but, in order to supply the needs of all the creatures He has made, He has only to open His hand!  
29. You hide Your face. As if He did but put His hand before the brightness of His Countenance—  
29, 30. They are troubled: You take away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created: and You renew the face of the earth. When God takes away the genial light of the summer’s sun, what multitudes of creatures die! And then, when the soft breath of spring blows upon the earth, how soon the multitudes of insects come teeming forth! Christian, here is comfort for you! Has God withheld His Spirit from you for a little while, and have many of your joys and comforts fallen dead? He has only to speak and He can, in a moment, renew all your comforts!  
31-35. The glory of the LORD shall endure forever: the LORD shall rejoice in His works. He looks on the earth and it trembles: He touches the hills and they smoke. I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. It seems as if the spirit of praise had bred in the Psalmist a spirit of indignation against sin. He could no longer have any patience with those who would not adore so great and so good a God and, therefore, he utters this imprecation upon their heads which is rather a prophecy of what will be their doom—“Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.”  
35. Bless you the LORD, O my Soul. Praise you the LORD. Thus the Psalmist, like a good musician, ends with the keynote of his song of

praise— *“Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”*  
May each of us say the same!  
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MEDITATION ON GOD  
NO. 2690

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING IN THE SUMMER OF 1858.

**“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
Psalm 104:34.**

DAVID, certainly, was not a melancholy man. Eminent as he was for his piety and for his religion, he was equally eminent for his joyfulness and gladness of heart. Read the verse that precedes my text, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.” It has often been insinuated, if it has not been openly said, that the contemplation of Divine things has a tendency to depress the spirits. Religion, many thoughtful persons have supposed, does not become the young—it checks the ardor of their youthful blood. It may be very well for men with gray heads who need something to comfort and solace them as they descend the hill of life into the grave. It may be well enough for those who are in poverty and deep trial, but that it is at all congruous with the condition of a healthy, able-bodied, successful and happy man, is generally said to be out of the question.

Now, there is no greater lie than this! No man is so happy but he would be happier still if he had true religion. The man with a fullness of earthly pleasures, whose barns are full of corn and whose presses burst with new wine would not lose any part of his happiness, had he the Grace of God in his heart! Rather, that joy would add sweetness to all his prosperity. It would strain off many of the bitter dregs from his cup. It would purify his heart and freshen his tastes for delights and show him how to extract more honey from the honeycomb. Religion is a thing that can make the most melancholy joyful and, at the same time, it can make the joyous ones still more joyful! It can make the gloomy bright, as it gives the oil of joy in the place of mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Moreover, it can light up the face that is joyous with a heavenly gladness. It can make the eyes sparkle with tenfold more brilliance and, happy as the man may be, he shall find that there is sweeter nectar than he has ever drunk before if he comes to the Fountain of Atoning Mercy and knows that his name is registered in the Book of Everlasting Life!

Temporal mercies will then have the charm of Redemption to enhance them. They will be no longer to him as shadowy phantoms which dance for a transient hour in the sunbeam. He will account them more precious because they are given to him, as it were, in some codicils of the Divine Testament which has promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. While goodness and mercy follow him all the days of his life, he will stretch forth his grateful anticipations to the future when he shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever! He will be able to say, as the Psalmist does here, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

Taking those last few words as the theme of our discourse, I shall speak, first, concerning a very profitable exercise—“meditation.” Secondly, concerning a very precious subject—“My meditation of Him. And, thirdly, concerning a very blessed result—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

I. First, here is A VERY PROFITABLE EXERCISE—“meditation.” Meditation is a word that more than half of you, I fear, do not know how to spell. You know how to repeat the letters of the word, but I mean to say, you cannot spell it in the reality of life. You do not occupy yourselves with any meditation at all. What do many of you who are merchants know concerning this matter? You rise up in the morning just in time to take your accustomed seat in the omnibus. You hasten to your counting house for your letters and there you continue all day long, for business when you are busy, or for gossip when business is dull. And at night you go home too tired for the wholesome recreation of your minds. Week by week, month by month and year by year it is still with you one everlasting grind, grind, grind! You have no time for meditation and you reckon, perhaps, that if you were to set apart half an hour in the day to ponder the weighty matters of eternity, it would be to you a clear loss of time. It is very wise of you to economize your minutes, but I suppose that if half an hour in a day could earn you a hundred pounds, you would not say that you could not afford it, because you know how to estimate pecuniary profit! Now, if you equally knew how to count the great profit of meditation, you would deem it a positive gain to yourselves to spend some time therein, for meditation is most profitable to the spirit—it is an extremely healthful and excellent occupation. Far from being wasted time, it is a judicious employment of time.  
Do not imagine that the meditative man is necessarily lazy— contrariwise, he lays the best foundation for useful works. He is not the best student who reads the most books, but he who meditates the most upon them. He shall not learn most of divinity who hears the greatest number of sermons, but he who meditates the most devoutly upon what he does hear. Nor shall he be so profound a scholar who takes down ponderous volumes, one after the other as he who, reading little by little, precept upon precept, and line upon line, digests what he reads and assimilates each sentiment to his heart by meditation—receiving the Word of God first into his understanding—and afterwards receiving the spirit of it into his own soul. Meditation is thus a very excellent employment. Let me for a few minutes tell you some of its uses.  
First, I think meditation furnishes the mind somewhat with rest. It is the couch of the soul. The time that a man spends in necessary rest, he never reckons to be wasted because he is refreshing and renovating himself for further exertion. Meditation, then, is the rest of the spirit. “Oh,” says one, “I must have rest. I have been working and toiling incessantly for months! I must have a day’s excursion. I must do this thing and the other.” Yes, and such recreation, in its proper place, is desirable. We ought to have seasons of innocent recreation, but, at the same time, if many of us knew how to spend a little time daily in the calm repose of contemplative retirement, we would find ourselves less exhausted by the wear and tear of our worldly duties. To meditate would be to us a salutary recreation and, instead of running ourselves out of breath, and laboring till a respite is compulsory, we would spread our intervals of ease and refreshing over the whole year and secure a small portion everyday by turning aside from the bustling crowd to meditate upon whatever subject we wish to occupy the most honorable place in our mind.  
Just as a change of posture relieves the weariness of the body, a change of thoughts will prevent your spirits becoming languid. Sit down in a silent chamber, at eventide. Throw the window up and look at God’s bright stars—and count those eyes of Heaven. Or if you like it better, pause in the noontide heat and look down upon the busy crowd in the streets and count the men, like so many ants upon the anthill of this world. Or if you care not to look about you, sit down and look within yourself—count the pulses of your own heart and examine the emotions of your own breast. At times, ‘tis well to muse upon Heaven, or, if you are a man loving to revel in the prophetic future, turn over the mystic pages and study the sacred visions recorded in the Book of Daniel, or the Book of Revelation. As you enter these hallowed intricacies and meditate upon these impressive symbols, you will rise up from your study mightily refreshed! You will find it like a couch to your mind.  
Again, meditation is the machine in which the raw material of knowledge is converted to the best uses. Let me compare it to a winepress. By reading, research and study, we gather the grapes, but it is by meditation that we press out the juice of those grapes and obtain the wine! How is it that many men who read a lot know very little? The reason is they read tome upon tome, and stow away knowledge with lumbering confusion inside their heads till they have laid so much weight on their brain that it cannot work! Instead of putting facts into the press of meditation and fermenting them till they can draw out right inferences, they leave them to rot and perish. They extract none of the sweet juice of wisdom from the precious fruits of the vine. I like, when I have read a book for about half an hour, to walk awhile and think it over. I shut up the volume and say, “Now, Mr. Author, you have made your speech, let me think over what you have said. A little meditation will enable me to distinguish between what I knew before and the fresh subject you have communicated to me—between your facts and your opinions—between your arguments and those I should make from the same premises.” Animals, after they have eaten, lie down and ruminate—they first crop the grass and afterwards digest it. So, meditation is the rumination of the soul whereby we get that nutriment which feeds and supports the mind.  
When you have gathered flowers in the field or garden, you arrange them in proper order and bind them together with the string of memory, but take heed that you put them into the water of meditation, otherwise they will soon fade and be fit only for the dunghill. When you have gathered pearls from the sea, remember that you will have gathered with them many worthless shells and much mud—therefore, sort them in your memory, and only keep those that are worth preserving. You must also open the oyster to extract the pearl and polish it to make it appear more beautiful. You may not string it in the necklace of your mind until it has been rubbed and garnished by meditation. Thus, you see that we need meditation to make use of what we have discovered. As it is the soul’s rest, so it is, at the same time, the means of making the best use of what the soul has acquired.  
Again, meditation is to the soul what oil was to the body of the wrestlers. When those old athletes went out to wrestle, they always took care, before they went, to oil themselves well, to make their joints supple and fit for their task. Now, meditation makes the soul supple—makes it so that it can use things when they come into the mind. Who are the men that can go into a controversy and get the mastery? Why, the men who meditate when they are alone! Who are the men that can preach? Not those who gad about and never commune only with their own hearts, but those who earnestly think as well when no one is near them as when there is a crowd around them. Who are the authors to write your books and keep up the constant supply of literature? They are meditative men. They keep their bones supple and their limbs fit for exercise by continually bathing themselves in the oil of meditation. How important, therefore, is meditation as a mental exercise, to have our minds in constant readiness for any service!  
I have thus pointed out to you that meditation is in itself useful to every man. But you did not come here to listen to a merely moral essay— you came to hear something about the Gospel of God—and what I have already said is but an introduction to what I have to say concerning the great necessity of meditation in religion. As meditation is good for the mind, even upon worldly topics and natural science, it is much more useful when we come to spiritual learning. The best and most saintly of men have been men of meditation! Isaac went out into the fields at eventide to meditate. David says, “I will meditate on Your statutes.” Paul, who himself meditated continually on all that related to the Gospel, writing to Timothy concerning the important things necessary in a good minister of Jesus Christ, says, “Meditate upon these things; give yourself wholly to them; that your profiting may appear to all.” To the Christian, meditation is most essential. I would almost question the being of a Christian and I would positively deny his well-being who lived habitually without meditation. Meditation and prayer are twin sisters and both of them appear to me equally necessary to Christian life. I think meditation

 must exist where there is prayer, and prayer is sure to exist where there is meditation.  
My Brothers and Sisters, there is nothing more needed to make Christians grow in Grace, nowadays, than meditation. Most of you are painfully negligent in this matter. You remind me of a sermon that one of my quaint old friends in the country once preached from the text, “The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting.” He told us that many people who would hunt for a sermon were too lazy to roast it by meditation. They knew not how to put the jack of memory through it and twist it round by meditation before the fire of piety, and so to cook it and make it fit for their soul’s food. So is it with many of you—after you have caught the sermon, you allow it to run away. How often do you, through lack of meditation, miss the entire purpose for which the discourse was designed? Unless you meditate upon the Truths of God we declare to you, you will gather little sweetness, you will acquire little profit and, certainly, you will be in no way established therein to your edification. Can you get the honey from the comb until you press it? You may be refreshed while you listen to the sermon, but it is the meditation afterwards which extracts the honey and gets the best and most luscious savor!  
Let me tell you that there ought to be special times for meditation. I think every man should set apart a portion of each day for this gracious exercise. A Christian will always be in a lean state if he has no time for sacred musings before his God. Those men who know most of God are such as meditate most upon Him. Those who realize most experimentally the Doctrines of Grace are those who meditate and soar beyond the reach of all sublunary things. I think we shall never have much advancement in our churches until the members begin to habitually accept the counsel, “Come, my people, enter you into your chambers and shut your doors behind you.” Or that other, “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” Till the din and noise of business somewhat abate and we give ourselves to calmer thought and, in the solemn silence of the mind find at once our Heaven and our God, we must expect to have regiments of dwarfs, and only here and there a giant. Giant minds cannot be nourished by mere casual hearing. Gigantic souls must have meditation to support them. Would you be strong? Would you be mighty? Would you be valiant for the Lord and useful in His cause? Take care that you follow the occupation of the Psalmist, David, and meditate! This is a very happy and profitable exercise.  
II. Now, secondly, let us consider A VERY PRECIOUS SUBJECT—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
Christian, you need no greater inducement to excite you than the subject here proposed—“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” To whom does that word, “Him,” refer? I suppose it may refer to all the three Persons of the glorious Trinity—“My meditation upon Jehovah shall be sweet.” And, verily, if you sit down to meditate upon God the Father, and muse upon His Sovereign, Immutable, unchangeable love toward His elect people—if you think of God the Father as the great Author and Originator of the plan of salvation—if you think of Him as the mighty Being who, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for Him to lie, has given us strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus—if you look to Him as the Giver of His only-begotten Son and who, for the sake of that Son, His best gift, will, with Him also freely give us all things—if you consider Him as having ratified the Covenant and pledged Himself ultimately to complete all His stipulations, in the gathering in of every chosen, ransomed soul, you will perceive that there is enough to engross your meditation forever, even were your attention limited to the manifestation of the Father’s love!  
Or, if you choose to do so, you may meditate upon God the Holy Spirit. Consider His marvelous operations on your own heart—how He quickened it when you were dead in trespasses and sins—how He brought you near to Jesus when you were a lost sheep, wandering far from the fold— how He called you with such a mighty efficacy that you could not resist His voice—how He drew you with the bands of love which would not let you go. Think of how often He has helped you in the hour of peril—how frequently He has comforted you with His promises in times of distress and trouble. And if you remember that, like holy oil, He will always supply your lamp until life’s last hour—He will always replenish you with His influences, proving Himself still your Teacher and your Guide till you get up yonder, where you shall see your Savior face to face, in the blessed Presence of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit—in such great truth you may well find a vast and, indeed, an infinite subject for your meditation.  
But, tonight, I prefer rather to confine this word, “Him,” to the Person of our adorable Savior. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” Ah, if it is possible that the meditation upon one Person of the Trinity can excel the meditation upon another, it is meditation upon Jesus Christ— **“‘Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.  
But if Immanuel’s face appears,  
My hope, my joy begins!  
His name forbids my slavish fears,  
His Grace forgives my sins.”**  
Precious Jesus, what can be a sweeter theme for me to think of than Your exalted Being—to conceive of You as the Son of God, who, with the golden compasses, struck out a circle from space and fashioned this round world? To think of You as the God who holds this mighty orb upon Your shoulders, You who are the King of Glory, before whom angels bow in lowliest homage? And yet to consider You as, likewise, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—  
*“In ties of blood with sinners one”—*  
to conceive of You as the Son of Mary, born of a virgin, made flesh like ordinary men, clothed in garments of humanity like mortals of our feeble race—to picture You in all Your suffering life, to trace You in all Your passion, to view You in the agony of Gethsemane, enduring the bloody sweat, the sore amazement. And then to follow You to the pavement, Gabbatha, and thence up the steep side of Calvary, bearing the Cross, braving the shame when Your soul was made an offering for my sins, when You did die the reconciling death ‘midst horrors, still to all but God, unknown! Verily, here is a meditation for my soul which must be “sweet” forever! I might, like the Psalmist, say, “My heart is composing a good matter.” The marginal reading is, “it boils, or bubbles up, while I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”  
Christ! “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” Consider Christ in any way you please and your meditation of Him will be sweet. Jesus may be compared to some of those lenses you have perhaps seen which you may take up and hold in one way and you see one light. You hold them in another way and you see another light—whichever way you turn them, you will always see some precious sparkling of light and some new colors starting up to your view. Ah, take Jesus for the theme of your meditation! Sit down and consider Him, think of His relation to your soul and you will never get to the end of that one subject!  
Think of His eternal relationship to you! Remember that the saints were free from all condemnation, in union with the Lamb, before the world was made. Think of your everlasting union with the Person of Jehovah-Jesus before this planet was sent rolling through space, and remember how your guilty soul was accounted spotless and clean even before you fell! And after that dire lapse, before you were restored, justification was imputed to you in the Person of Jesus Christ. Think of your known and manifest relationship to Him since you have been called by His Grace. Think how He has become your Brother, how His heart has beaten in sympathy with yours, how He has kissed you with the kisses of His mouth and His love has been to you sweeter than wine. Look back upon some happy, sunny spots in your history, where Jesus has whispered, “I am yours,” and you have said, “My Beloved is mine. Think of some choice moments when an angel has stooped from Heaven and taken you up on his wings and carried you aloft to sit in heavenly places where Jesus sits, that you might commune with Him.  
Or think, if it shall better please you, of some pensive moments, when you have had what Paul sets so much store by—fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. Think of seasons when the sweat has rolled from your brow, almost as it did from that of Jesus—yet not the sweat of blood— when you have knelt down and felt that you could die with Christ, even as you had risen with Him. And then, when you have exhausted that portion of the subject, think of your relationship to Christ which is to be developed in Heaven. Imagine the hour to have come when you shall— *“Greet the blood-besprinkled band,  
On the eternal shore”*  
and forever range the—  
*“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Arrayed in living green.”*  
Picture to your mind that moment when Jesus Christ shall salute you as “more than a conqueror,” and put a golden crown upon your head, more glittering than the stars. And think of that transporting hour when you will take that crown from off your brow and, climbing the steps of Jesus’ Throne, you shall put it on His head, and crown Him once more Lord of your soul, as well as “Lord of All.” Ah, if you come and tell me you have no subjects for meditation, I will answer—Surely you have not tried to meditate, or you would say with the Psalmist, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
Suppose you have finished thinking of your Savior as He is especially related to you. Consider Him, next, as He is related to the world. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved,” and, undoubtedly, He will one day save the world, for He who redeemed it by price and by power, will restore it and renew it from the effects of the Fall. Oh, think of Jesus in this relationship as the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in! He will come again to our earth one day and when He comes, He will find this world still defaced with the old curse upon it—the primeval curse of Eden. He will find plague, pestilence and war still here—but when He comes, He will bid men beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks—war shall be obliterated from among the sciences. He shall give the Word and there shall be a great company that will publish it and, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Jesus Christ shall come! Christians, be always watching and waiting for the Second Coming of your Lord Jesus Christ! And while you wait, meditate upon that coming.

Think, O my Soul, of that august day when you shall see Him with all His glorious train, coming to call the world to judgment and to avenge Himself upon His enemies! Think of all His triumphs when Satan shall be bound, death shall be crushed and Hell shall be conquered—and when He shall be saluted as the universal Monarch, “God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
I believe that even when we get to Heaven, we shall need no subject for meditation there, except Jesus Christ. There will be little else we shall want of Heaven besides Jesus Christ. He will be our bread, our food, our beauty, and our glorious dress. The atmosphere of Heaven will be Christ! Everything in Heaven will be Christ-like. Yes, Christ is the Heaven of His people. To be in Christ and to be with Christ, is the essence of Heaven— **“Not all the harps above  
Can make a heavenly place,  
Should Christ His residence remove,  
Or but conceal His face.”**  
III. Let me proceed to point out A VERY BLESSED RESULT. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
This depends very much upon the character of the one who meditates. I know some persons who come into chapel and who are very glad when they hear the minister pronounce the benediction and dismiss the assembly. They are very glad when all is over and they would far rather hear the parting doxology than the text. As for a meditation on Christ, instead of saying it is sweet, they would say it is very dry. If they happen to hear an anecdote or a tale, they do not mind remembering that—but a meditation which would be entirely on Christ would be dry to them—and they would be glad to hear it brought to a close. Ah, that is because of the taste you have in your mouth! There is something wrong about your palate. You have your mouth out of taste through eating some of the world’s poor dainties! You have some of the powder of the apples of Sodom hanging on your lips and that spoils the glorious flavor of your meditation on Jesus! In fact, it prevents your meditating on Christ at all. It is only a hearing of the meditation with your ears, not a receiving it with your hearts. But here the Psalmist says, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
What a mercy, dear Friends, that there is something sweet in this world for us! We need it, I am sure, for, as for most other things in the world, they are very, very bitter. Go through the great laboratory of this world and how many will be the cases that you will see marked bitter! There are perhaps more aloes put in our cup than any other ingredient. We have to take a great quantity of bitters in the course of our lives. What a mercy it is, then, that there is one thing that is sweet! “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” So sweet, Beloved, that all the other bitters are quite swallowed up in its sweetness! Have I not seen the widow, when her husband has been called away, and he who was her strength, the stay and sustenance of her life, has been laid in the grave—have I not seen her hold up her hands and say, “Ah, though he is gone, still my Maker is my Husband. ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away,’ blessed be His holy name”?  
What was the reason of her patient submission to the will of God? Because she had a sweet meditation to neutralize the bitterness of her reflections. And do I not remember, even now, seeing a man whose property had been washed away by the tide, and whose lands had been swallowed up and become quicksand, instead of being any longer profitable to him? Beggared and bankrupt, with streaming eyes, he held up his hands and repeated Habakkuk’s words, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!” Was it not because his meditation on Christ was so sweet that it absorbed the bitterness of his trouble? And oh, how many, when they have come to the dark waters of death, have found that surely their bitterness was past, for they perceived that death was swallowed up in victory through their meditation upon Jesus Christ!  
Now, if any of you have come here with your mouths out of taste through affliction and trouble. If you have been saying with Jeremiah, “He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drunken with wormwood. He has also broken my teeth with gravel, He has covered me with ashes,” take a little of this choice cordial—I can assure you that it is sweet! Lacrymae Christi, it is called. If you will take these tears of Jesus and put them in your mouth, they will take away all the unpleasant flavor that is already there! Or, again, I bid you take this meditation upon Christ as a piece of scented stuff that was perfumed in Heaven. It matters not what you have in your house—this shall make it redolent of Paradise—shall make it smell like those breezes that once blew through Eden’s garden, wafting the odor of flowers. Ah, there is nothing that can so console your spirits and relieve all your distresses and troubles as the feeling that now you can meditate on the Person of Jesus Christ. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
But, my dear Hearers, shall I dismiss you without asking you whether you have ever had a true meditation upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I do not like to preach a sermon without pressing it home to the consciences of my hearers. I never like to bring you out a sword and show it to you, and say, “Here is a sword, and it is sharp.” I always like to make you feel that it is sharp by cutting you with it! Would to God that the sword of the Spirit might penetrate many of your hearts! When I see so many gathered together on a weeknight, I am astonished. When I came to London, I did not fancy there would be half such a company on the Sabbath, much less on a weekday. But why have you come, my Brothers and Sisters? “What did you go out to see? A reed shaken with the wind?” What have you come out to see? A Prophet? No, but I say that you have come to see something more than a Prophet—you have come to see and hear something of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord! How many of you meditate on Christ?  
Christian men and women, do not many of you live below your privileges? Are you not living without having choice moments of communion with your Savior? I think if you had a free pass to Heaven’s palace, you would use it very often. If you might go there whenever you liked and hold communion with some person whom you dearly loved, you would often be found there. But here is your blessed Lord Jesus, the King of Heaven, and He gives you that which can admit you to intimate communion with Him! And yet you live without meditating upon His work, meditating upon His Person, meditating upon His offices, and meditating upon His Glory. Christian men and women! I ask myself, and I ask you, is it not time we should begin to live nearer to God? What is to become of our churches? I do not know what to think of Christendom at large. As I travel through the country and go here and there, I see the churches in a most deplorable state. True, the Gospel is preached in most places of worship, but it is preached as it might be by bumble-bees in pitchers— always with the same monotonous sound—and little or no good is done. I fear that the fault lies in the pews as well as in the pulpits. If hearers are meditative, preachers must be meditative. It is very true that water does not run uphill, but when you hearers begin to meditate and pray over the Word, your ministers will realize that you have gone beyond them—and they will themselves meditate and give you the Gospel just as it comes fresh from their hearts—and it will be food for your souls.  
And for the rest of you—you who have never meditated on Jesus Christ—what do you think will become of you when the bitterness of death’s agony shall be in your mouth? When you taste death, how do you hope to destroy its ill flavor? Yet “that last, that most bitter cup which mortal man can taste” is but a dire foretaste of what is to follow! The first drops are bad enough, when you sip here the beginning of remorse on account of sin, but that future cup in Hell—that terrible mixture which God deals out to the lost in the Pit—what will you do when you have to drink that? What will you do when it will be your sad meditation that you rejected Jesus, that you despised His Gospel, that you scoffed at His Word? What will you do in that dread extremity?  
You worldly business men, will your ledgers afford you a sweet meditation in Hell? Ungodly lawyer, will it be sweet for you to meditate on your deeds and documents when you go there? Laboring man, will it be a sweet meditation to you to think that your wages were spent in drunkenness, or your Sabbaths profaned and your soul neglected? And you, mere professor, will it be a sweet meditation to you to sit down and think of your hypocrisy? And, ah, you carnally-minded men who are indulging the flesh, pampering the appetite and not serving the Lord—whose god is your belly and whose glory is in your shame—will your career furnish a sweet meditation to you at the last? Be assured of this, my Hearers, your sins must be your meditation, then, if Christ is not your meditation now!  
O wicked men! Wicked women! Let me say my closing word to you and to all who know not God. I will give you a subject for your meditation tonight—it shall be a parable. A certain tyrant sent for one of his subjects and said to him, “What is your employment?” He answered, “I am a blacksmith.” “Then go home,” he said, “and make me a chain of such a length.” He went home. It occupied him several months and he had no wages all the while he was making the chain, only the trouble and pains of making it. Then he brought it to the monarch, who said, “Go back, and make it twice as long.” He gave him nothing to do it with, but sent him away. Again he worked on and made it twice as long. He brought it up again, and the monarch said, “Go and make it still longer.” Each time he brought it, there was nothing but the command to make it longer. And when he brought it up at last, the monarch said to his servants, “Take it and bind him hand and foot with it, and cast him into a furnace of fire.” There were his wages for making the chain!

Here is a lesson which will afford you a subject for meditation tonight, you who are servants of the devil. Your master is telling you to make a chain. Some of you have been 50 years welding the links of that chain and he says, “Go and make it still longer.” Next Sunday morning you will open that shop of yours and put another link on. Next Sunday night you will be drunk and put another link on. Next Monday you will do a dishonest action, and so you will keep on adding fresh links to the chain. And when you have lived 20 more years, the devil will say, “Add still more links!” And then, at last, his command will be, “Take him and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into a furnace of fire.” “For the wages of sin is death.”  
There is a subject for your meditation! I do not think it will be sweet, but if God makes it profitable, it will do you good. You must have strong medicines, sometimes, when your disease is bad. God apply this message to your hearts! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE PLEASURES OF PIETY  
NO. 2759

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 29, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, DURING THE SUMMER OF 1858.

**“My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
Psalm 104:34.**

IT has often been insinuated, if it has not been openly affirmed, that the contemplation of Divine things has a tendency to depress the spirits. Religion, many thoughtless persons have supposed, is not becoming to the young—it checks the ardor of their youthful blood. It may be very well for men with gray heads who need something to comfort and solace them as they descend the hill of life into the grave. It may be suitable for those who are in poverty and deep trial, but that it is at all congruous with the condition of a healthy, able-bodied, successful and happy young man—this is generally said to be out of the question!

Now, there is no greater lie than that! No man is so happy but he would be happier if he had true religion. The man with the greatest abundance of earthly pleasure or treasure, whose barns are full and whose presses burst with new wine would not lose any part of his happiness, had he the Grace of God in his heart! Rather, that joy would add sweetness to all his prosperity. It would strain off many of the bitter dregs from his cup. It would purify his heart and freshen his taste for delights—and show him how to extract more honey from the honeycomb! Religion is a thing that can make the most melancholy, joyful and, at the same time, it can make the joyous ones still more joyful! It can make the gloomy bright, as it gives the oil of joy in the place of mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Moreover, it can light up the face that is joyous with a heavenly gladness! It can make the eyes sparkle with tenfold more brilliance and, happy as the man may be, he shall find that there is sweeter nectar than he has ever drunk before, if he comes to the Fountain of atoning mercy, if he knows that his name is registered in the Book of Everlasting Life!

Temporal mercies will then have the charm of redemption to enhance them. They will be no longer to him as shadowy phantoms which dance for a transient hour in the sunbeam. He will account them more precious because they are given to him, as it were, in some codicils of the Divine Testament which has promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come! While goodness and mercy follow him all the days of his life, he will stretch forth his grateful anticipations to the future when he shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever! he will be able to say, as the Psalmist does in this Psalm, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will Sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.”

I. First, let us consider THE VERY PRECIOUS SUBJECT OF MEDITATION mentioned in our text “My meditation of HIM shall be sweet.”  
Christian, you need no greater inducement to excite you to meditation than the subject here proposed—“My meditation of HIM shall be sweet.” To whom does that word, “Him,” refer? I suppose it may refer to all the three Persons of the glorious Trinity. My meditation upon Jehovah shall be sweet. And, verily, if you sit down to meditate upon God the Father and reflect on His Sovereign, Immutable, unchangeable love toward His elect people—if you think of God the Father as the great Author and Originator of the plan of salvation—if you think of Him as the mighty Being who has said that by two Immutable things, wherein it is impossible for Him to lie, He has given us strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. If you look to Him as the Giver of His only-begotten Son and who, for the sake of that Son, His best gift, will, with Him, also freely give us all things—if you consider Him as having ratified the Covenant and pledged Himself ultimately to complete all its stipulations in the ingathering of every chosen, ransomed soul—you will perceive that there is enough to engross your meditation forever, even were your attention limited to the manner and matter of the Father’s love!  
Or, if you choose, you shall think of God the Holy Spirit. You shall consider His marvelous operations on your own heart—how He quickened it when you were dead in trespasses and sins—how He brought you near to Jesus when you were a lost sheep, wandering far from the fold. How He called you with such mighty efficacy that you could not resist His voice— how He drew you with the wondrous cords of His almighty love. If you think how often He has helped you in the hour of peril—how frequently He has comforted you with a promise in times of distress and trouble and, if you think that, like holy oil, He will always supply your lamp— and until life’s last hour He will always replenish you with His influences, still proving Himself your Teacher and your Guide till you get up yonder, where you shall see your Savior, face to face, in the blessed Presence of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—in such contemplation you might find a vast and infinite subject for your meditation!  
But, at this time, I prefer to confine the application of this word, “Him,” to the Person of our adorable Savior. “My meditation of HIM shall be sweet.” Ah, if it is possible that the meditation upon one Person of the Trinity can excel the meditation of another, it is meditation upon Jesus Christ!—

*“Till God in human flesh I see, My thoughts no comfort find. The holy, just, and sacred Three*

*Are terrors to my mind.  
But if Immanuel’s face appears  
My hope, my joy begins!  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His Grace forgives my sins”*

Precious Jesus! What can be a sweeter theme for my meditation than to think of Your exalted Being—to conceive of You as the Son of God who, with the golden compasses struck out a circle from space and fashioned this round world? To think of You as the God who holds this mighty orb upon Your shoulders and are, at the same time, the King of Glory, before whom angels bow in lowliest homage? And yet to consider You as likewise “bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh”?—

*“In ties of blood with sinners one,”*  
to conceive of you as the Son of Mary, born of a virgin, wearing flesh like men, clothed in garments of Humanity like mortals of our feeble race? To picture You in all Your suffering life, to trace You in all Your passion? To view You in the agony of Gethsemane, enduring the bloody sweat, the sore amazement and then to follow You to Gabbatha, the pavement, and then up the steep side of Calvary, “enduring the Cross, despising the shame,” when Your soul was made an offering for my sins, when You did die the reconciling death midst horrors still to all but God unknown? Verily, here is a meditation for my soul which must be “sweet” forever! I might begin like the Psalmist who wrote the 45th Psalm and say, “My heart is inditing (the marginal reading is bubbles up) a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

Consider our Lord Jesus Christ in any way you please and your meditation of Him will be sweet! Jesus may be compared to some of those lenses you have seen which you may take up and hold one way, and you see one kind of light, and then hold in another way and you see another kind of light. And whichever way you turn them, you will always see some precious sparkling light and some new colors starting up to your view. Ah, take Jesus for your theme, sit down and consider Him—think of His relation to your own soul and you will never get through that one subject! Think of His eternal relationship to you—remember that the saints, in union with the Lamb, were free from condemnation before the world was made! Think of your everlasting union with the Person of Jehovah Jesus before this planet was sent rolling through space—and how your guilty soul was accounted spotless and clean even before you fell! And after that dire lapse, before you were restored, justification was imputed to you in the Person of Jesus Christ. Think of your known and manifest relationship to Him since you have been called by His Grace. Think how He has become your Brother, how His heart has beaten in most tender sympathy with yours—how He has kissed you with the kisses of His love and how that love has been to you sweeter than wine!

Look back upon some happy, sunny spots in your history where Jesus has whispered to you, “I am Yours,” and you have said, “My Beloved is mine.” Think of some choice moments when an angel has stooped from Heaven and taken you up on his wings and carried you aloft to sit in heavenly places where Jesus sits, that you might commune with Him. Or think, if it pleases you, of some pensive moments when you have had what Paul sets so much store by—fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. Think of seasons when the sweat has rolled from your brow, almost as it did from that of Jesus—yet not the sweat of blood—when you have knelt down and felt that you could die with Christ, even as you had risen with Him. And then, when you have exhausted that portion of the subject, think of your relationship to Christ which is to be fully developed in Heaven. Imagine the hour to have come when you shall—

*“Greet the blood-besprinkled bands*

*On the eternal shore”—*  
and range the—  
*“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Arrayed in living green.”*  
Picture in your mind that moment when Jesus Christ shall salute you as “more than a conqueror” and put a pearly crown upon your head, glittering more brightly than the stars! And think of that transporting hour when you will take that crown from off your own brow and, climbing the steps of Jesus’ Throne, you shall put it on His head, or lay it at His feet and once more crown Him Lord of your soul, as well as “Lord of All.” Ah, if you come and tell me you have no subject for meditation, I will answer—Surely you have not tried to meditate—for your meditation of HIM must be sweet!  
Suppose you have done thinking of Him as He is related to you. Consider Him, next, as He is related to the world. Remember that Jesus Christ says He came into the world that the world, through Him, might be saved and, undoubtedly, He will one day save the world, for He who redeemed it by price, and by power, will restore it and renew it from the effects of the Fall. Think of Jesus in this relationship as “the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.” He will come again to our earth, one day, and when He comes, He will find this world still defaced with the old curse upon it—the primeval curse of Eden. He will find plague, pestilence and war still here, but when He comes, He shall bid men, “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks.” War shall be obliterated from among the sciences. He shall speak the Word and there shall be a great company that will publish it. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ shall surely come again! Christians, be waiting for the Second Coming of your Lord! And while you wait, meditate upon that coming! Think, O my Soul, of that august day when you shall see Him with all His pompous train, coming to call the world to judgment and to avenge Himself upon His enemies! Think of all His triumphs when Satan shall be bound, death shall be crushed, Hell shall be conquered and He shall be saluted as the universal Monarch—“Lord over all, blessed forever. Amen.” “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” Ah, Christian, you are not afraid to be alone a little while, now, for lack of subjects of meditation. Some persons say that they cannot bear to be even for an hour in solitude. They have nothing to do, nothing to think about. Surely, no Christian will ever talk so, for let me but give him one word to think of—Christ—and he may spell that over forever! Let me give him the word, Jesus, and only let him try to think it over and he shall find that an hour is nothing, and that eternity is not half long enough for our glorious Savior’s praise! Yes, Beloved, I believe that even when we get to Heaven, we shall need no subject for meditation, there, except Jesus Christ! I know that there are some great divines and learned philosophers who have been telling us that when we go to Heaven, we shall occupy our time in flying from star to star, and from one planet to another. They say that we shall go and see Jupiter, and Mercury, and Venus and all the host of celestial bodies!  
We shall behold all the wonders of creation! We shall explore the depths of science, so they tell us, and they say that there are no limits to the mysteries we shall understand. My reply to people who imagine all this concerning Heaven is that I have no objection that it should be so, if it will afford them any pleasure. I hope you Christians all will have and I know my Heavenly Father will let you have whatever will make you happy. But while you are viewing stars, I will sit down and look at Jesus. And if you told me you had seen the inhabitants of Saturn and Venus, and the man in the moon, I would say—Ah, yes—  
*“But in His looks a glory stands,  
The noblest labor of God’s hands!  
God in the Person of His Son,  
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”*  
But you will say, “You will become tired, surely, of looking at Him.” No, I would reply, I have been looking at but one of His hands and I have not yet thoroughly examined the hole where one of the nails went in. And when I have lived ten thousand years more, I will take His other hand and sit down and look at each gaping wound. And then I may descend to His side, and His feet, and still I shall be able to say to Him—  
*“Millions of years my wondering eyes  
Shall over Your beauties rove  
And endless ages I’ll adore  
The glories of Your love.”*  
You may go flitting about as far as you like. I will sit there and look at the God in Human flesh, for I believe that I shall learn more of God and more of His works in the Person of Jesus than you could with all the advantage of travelling on wings of light, though you would have the most elevated imaginations and the most gigantic intellects to help you in your search! Brothers and Sisters, our meditation of Christ will be sweet! There will be little else we shall need of Heaven beside Jesus Christ! He will be our bread, our food, our beauty and our glorious dress. The atmosphere of Heaven will be Christ—everything in Heaven will be Christlike—yes, Christ is the Heaven of His people! To be in Christ and to be with Christ is the essence of Heaven—

*“Not all the harps above  
Can make a heavenly place,  
Should Christ His residence remove,  
Or but conceal His face.”*

So you see that Christ is the very precious subject of our meditation! Our meditation of Him shall be sweet.  
II. Now, in the second place, let me proceed to point out A BLESSED RESULT OF THIS MEDITATION. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet”  
This result depends very much upon the character of the one who meditates. I know some persons who come to Chapel who are very glad when they hear the minister pronounce the Benediction and dismiss the assembly. They are very glad when all is over and they would rather hear the parting Doxology than the text. As for a meditation on Christ, instead of saying it is sweet, they would say, “It is preciously dry.” If they happen to hear an anecdote or a tale, they do not mind listening to that—but a meditation entirely upon Christ would be dry enough to them and they would be glad to hear it brought to a close. Ah, Friend, that is because of the taste you have got in your mouth—there is something wrong with your palate. You know when we have been taking a certain kind of medicine and our mouth has been impregnated with a strong flavor, whatever we eat acquires that taste. So is it with you. You have got your mouth out of taste with some of the world’s poor dainties. You have got some of the powder of the apples of Sodom hanging on your lips and that spoils the glorious flavor of your meditation on Jesus. In fact, it prevents your meditating on Christ at all. It is only a hearing of the meditation with your ears, not a receiving it into your hearts. But the Psalmist says,” My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”  
What a mercy, dear Friends, that there is something sweet in this world for us! We need it. For, I am sure, as for most other things in the world, they are very, very bitter. There is little here that seems sweet, at first, but has a bitter flavor afterwards. And there are too many things that are actually bitter and void of any relish. Go through the great laboratory of this world and how many will be the cases and bottles that you will see marked bitter! There are, perhaps, more of aloes put in our cup than of any other ingredient. We have to take a great quantity of bitters in the course of our lives. What a mercy, then, it is that there is one thing that is sweet! “My meditation of HIM shall be sweet”—so sweet, Beloved, that all the other bitters are quite swallowed up in its sweetness! Have I not seen the widow, when her husband has departed and he who was her strength, the stay of her life and her sustenance, has been laid in the grave—have I not seen her hold up her hands and say, “Ah, though he is gone, still my Maker is my Husband. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”?  
What was the reason of her patient submission? Because she had a sweet meditation to neutralize the bitterness of her reflections. And do I not remember, even now, seeing a man whose property had been washed away by the tide, and his lands swallowed up and become quicksand, instead of being any longer profitable to him! Beggared and bankrupt, with streaming eyes, he held up his hands and repeated Habakkuk’s words, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Was it not because his meditation on Christ was so sweet that it absorbed the bitterness of his trouble? And oh, how many, when they have even come to the dark waters of death, have found that surely their bitterness was past, for they perceived, through their meditation upon Jesus Christ, that death was swallowed up in victory!  
Now, if any of you have come here with your mouths out of taste through affliction and trouble. If you have been saying of the Lord, with Jeremiah, “He has filled me with bitterness. He has made me drunk with wormwood. He has also broken my teeth with gravel. He has covered me with ashes.” Take a little of this choice cordial—I can assure you that it is sweet—Lacrymae Christi, it is called. If you will take these tears of Jesus, and put them in your mouth, they will take away all the unpleasant flavor that is there now. Or again, I bid you take this meditation upon Christ as a piece of frankincense that was perfumed in Heaven. It matters not what you have in your house—this shall make it suggestive of Paradise and shall make it smell like those breezes that once blew through Eden’s garden, wafting the odor of perfect flowers. Ah, there is nothing that can so console your spirits and relieve all your distresses and troubles as the feeling that now you can meditate on the Person of Jesus Christ! “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

But, my dear Hearers, shall I send you away without asking whether you have all had such a meditation upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I do not like to ever preach a sermon without pressing it home upon the consciences of all my hearers. I never care to bring to you the sword of the Spirit and show it to you and say, “Here is a sword and it is sharp.” I always like to make you feel that it is sharp by cutting you with it! Would to God that the sword of the Spirit might penetrate many of your hearts right now! When I see so many gathered together even on a weekday, I am astonished. When I came to London, I did not fancy that there would be half such a congregation as this even on the Sabbath, much less on a weekday. But why have you come, my Brothers and Sisters? What did you come out to see? A reed shaken with the wind? What have you come to see? A Prophet? No, but I say that you have come to see something more than a Prophet. You have come to see and to hear of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord! How many of you really do meditate upon Christ?  
Christian men and women, do not many of you live below your privileges? Are you not living without having choice moments of communion with Jesus? I think if you had a free pass to Heaven’s palace, you would use it very often. If you might go there and hold communion with some person whom you dearly loved, you would often be found there. But here is your Lord Jesus, the King of Heaven, and He gives you that which can open the gates of Heaven and let you in to hold sweet fellowship with Him—and yet you live without meditating upon His work, meditating upon His Person, meditating upon His offices and meditating upon His Glory! Christian men and women, I say to you—Is it not time to begin to live nearer to God? What is to become of our churches? I do not know what to think of Christendom at large. As I travel through the country and go here and there, I see the churches in a most awfully dwindled state. True, the Gospel is preached in most places, but it is preached as it might be by bumble bees in pitchers—always with the same monotonous sound and little or no good is done!  
I fear that the fault lies in the pews, as well as in the pulpit. If hearers are meditative, preachers must be meditative. It is very true that water does not run uphill, but when you begin to meditate and pray over the Word of God, your ministers will see that you have gone beyond them and they will set to meditate themselves, and give you the Gospel just as it comes fresh from their hearts—and it will be precious food for your souls.  
As for you who have never meditated on Jesus Christ, what do you think will become of you when your greatest bitterness shall be in your mouth? When you taste death, how do you hope to destroy its ill flavor? Yet, “that last, that bitter cup which mortal man can taste” is but a dire apprehension. When you have to drink that gall in Hell forever—when the cup of torments which Jesus did not drain for you will have to be drained by yourself—what will you do? The Christian can go to Heaven because Christ has drunk damnation dry for him, but the ungodly and unconverted man will have to drink the dregs of the wine of Gomorrah! What will you do then? The first taste is bad enough, when you sip the drops of remorse here on account of sin. But that future cup in Hell— that terrible mixture which God deals out to the lost in the Pit—what will you do when you have to drink that—when your meditation will be that you rejected Jesus, that you despised His Gospel, that you scoffed at His Word? What will you do in that dread extremity?  
You business men, will your ledger serve you with a sweet meditation in Hell? Lawyer, will it be sweet for you to meditate on your deeds when you go there? Laboring man, will it be a sweet meditation to you, to think that your wages were spent in drunkenness, or your Sabbaths profaned and your duties neglected? And you, professor, will it be a sweet meditation to sit down and think of your hypocrisy? And, ah, you carnallyminded men who are indulging the flesh, and pampering the appetite, and not serving the Lord, “whose God is your belly, and whose glory is in your shame”—will your career furnish a sweet meditation to you at last? Be assured of this—your sins must be your meditation, then, if Christ is not your meditation now! May there be great searching of heart among you! How often do your convictions disperse like the smoke from the chimney, or the chaff from the winnower’s hand—they soon vanish. It will not profit you to live at this rate—hearing sermons and forgetting them. Take heed to the voice of warning lest God should say, “He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”  
O wicked, men! Wicked men! I need to say just this last word to all of you who know not God, and then you shall go. I will give you a subject for your meditation. It shall be a parable. A certain tyrant sent for one of his subjects and said to him, “What is your employment?” He answered, “I am a blacksmith.” “Go home,” he said, “and make me a chain of suchand-such a length.” He went home. The work occupied him several months and he had no wages all the while he was making the chain— only the trouble and the pains of making it. Then he brought it to the monarch, who said, “Go back and make it twice as long.” He gave him nothing to do it with, but sent him away. Again he worked on and made it twice as long. He brought it up again, and the monarch said, “Go and make it still longer.” Each time he brought it, there was nothing but the command to make it still longer. And when he brought it up at last, the monarch said, “Take it, bind him hand and foot with it and cast him into a furnace of fire.”  
That were his wages for making the chain! Here is a meditation for you tonight, you servants of the devil! Your master, Satan, is telling you to make a chain. Some of you have been 50 years welding the links of the chain and he says, “Go and make it still longer.” Next Sunday morning you will open that shop of yours and put another link on. Next Saturday night you will be drunk and put another link on. Next Monday you will do a dishonest action and so you will keep on making fresh links to this chain. And when you have lived 20 more years, the devil will say, “Put more links on!” And then, at last, the command will be, “Take him and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into a furnace of fire.” “For the wages of sin is death.”  
There is a subject for your meditation! I do not think it will be sweet, but if God makes it profitable, it will do you good. You sometimes must have strong medicines when the disease is bad. God apply His own Word to your hearts, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

Verse 1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. These are very simple words, but they contain a great depth of meaning. The teaching conveyed by this Epistle is very profound, though the language is such as even a child can understand. There must be faith in Jesus Christ as the anointed Son of God—otherwise there is no new birth, no regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

1. And everyone that loves Him that begot loves Him also that is begotten of Him. If we love the Father, we love the Son. If we love God, we love all His people! All who are born into the Divine family are the objects of our affection.

2, 3. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. Not that we talk about our experience. Not that we use endearing expressions concerning the Savior. Not that we are attentive to outward religious ordinances, but, “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” A holy life is the best possible proof of true love to God.

3. And His commandments are not grievous. To His people, they are charming, not grievous. They delight themselves in the Law of God and they only wish that they could be perfectly conformed to the Divine Will.

4. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith. And the Apostle gives a description of what kind of faith it is that overcomes the world.

5. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God? So it is faith in Jesus which is, first of all, the evidence of the new birth and which is, afterwards, the weapon wielded by the new-born soul, with which it fights till it gains the victory over the world!

6. This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only. Cleansing us as to our lives, “not by water only.”  
6. But by water and blood. The blood which takes away the guilt of our offenses. There is a double cure for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. First, the putting away of all our past guilt and then the delivering of our hearts from defilement, so that we live after a holy fashion.  
6, 7. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in Heaven. Or, “witness in Heaven.”  
7, 8. The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are One. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. Blessed is the man who has that threefold witness—the Spirit of God quickening him, the water cleansing his daily life, and the blood delivering his conscience from trouble because he is delivered from sin by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ!  
9. If we receive the witness of men. And we are constantly obliged to do that, for we could not get on at all if we did not believe our fellow men, yet—  
9-12. The witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life. Ah, then, my Soul, if you have, by faith, embraced the Son of God, you have a life which can never die! You have the life of God within you! You have Heaven begun within you and you have it now! Dear Hearer, have you the Son of God? Have you taken Him to yourself by a distinct believing grasp, saying, “This Christ shall be mine—this blessed Jesus shall be my Savior”? Then you have the Apostle’s Inspired declaration, “He that has the Son has life.” And his other declaration is equally true, “He that has not the Son of God has not life.”

13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God. The Apostle said that they did believe, yet he wrote to them that they might believe on the name of the Son of God because he that believes needs to believe more—more as to matter, and more as to the firmness of the grip of his faith. There are some who do really believe on Christ who do not know that they have eternal life. They have it, but they scarcely realize that they have it—they are afraid to believe that it is theirs. But here the Holy Spirit assures us, through the Apostle, that those who believe on the name of the Son of God have eternal life. Oh, what a comfort this is! Then you can never perish! There are some who say that you can fall from Grace, but how can that be? What kind of life would that be? It would be temporary life! But the Scripture says, “he that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” Then, if it is everlasting, it is everlasting, and there cannot be any end to it! Our Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman at the well of Sychar, “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”  
14. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. We do not wish to have a more unlimited promise than that! We do not ask God to hear our prayer if it is not according to His will. The true child of God does not wish to have his own will, but he says, “No, Lord, You know much better than I do what to grant, so, when my will is contrary to Your will, Your will, not mine, be done! This is as gracious an assurance of answers to prayer as the true children of God wish to have. If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”  
15. And if we know that He hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of Him. That is, before we actually receive the answers to our petitions. After the prayer of faith, we know that our request has been granted and we act upon the belief that we have already received what we asked of God. A true man’s promise is as good as the performance of it—we unhesitatingly take a note of hand, or a promise to pay when we know that it is drawn upon a reliable firm. We treat it as money. It passes from hand to hand, through the bankers, and is regarded as if it were the coin itself—then shall we not treat our God in this fashion when we have His promise to pay or to give? We have pleaded it in prayer, so let us rise from our knees, not merely hoping that we shall receive what we have asked, but believing that we shall surely have it! “If we know that He hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of Him.”  
16, 17. If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. There are multitudes of such sins, but there is a place beyond which, if a man passes in sin, he becomes henceforth dead and utterly insensible—and he will never be quickened and never be saved. If we knew a man to be in such a condition as that, the Apostle’s words would apply to such a case. “I do not say that he shall pray for it.” But, as we cannot tell that any man is in that condition, it is well for us to ask for Grace to be able to pray for every sinner, however great his sin may be! We know that “all unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”  
18. We know that whoever is born of God sins not. That is to say, that is not the bent and current of his life. He makes mistakes, he falls into errors and he sins, but that is not the habitual description of his life.  
18-21. But he that is begotten of God keep himself and that wicked one touches him not. And we knew that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. At the time of the Reformation, there was a general order that this text should be put around the Communion Tables. I think it is time that it was put around the Communion Tables again. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols”—for that is one place where idols are often found, though not by any means the only one.  
21. Amen. And we say, “Amen. So let it be.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

END OF VOLUME 47

PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1277 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TRIAL BY THE WORD  
NO. 1277

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Until the time that his word came: the Word of the Lord tried him.” Psalm 105:19.**

Joseph was altogether an extraordinary person. He was a young man of great personal beauty and he exhibited, also, a lovely character, full of gentleness, kindness and truth. The Grace of God had made him as beautiful in mind as Nature had made him handsome in person. He was also exceedingly thoughtful. Perhaps, at first, rather more thoughtful than active, so that his brothers, not only because he had seen two remarkable visions, but probably because of his contemplative habits, said of him, “Behold, this dreamer comes.” He was the swan in the duck’s nest—his superior genius and character separated him from the rest of the family— and none of them could understand him. He was, therefore, the object of their envy and hatred so that they even proposed to murder him and ultimately sold him for a slave.

He was destined, however, for a nobler lot than theirs. They were to feed their flocks, but he was ordained to feed the world! They were to rule their own families, but he to govern the most ancient of empires! From the very beginning his supremacy in Israel had been foretold by a double dream. Their sheaves were seen to pay homage to his sheaf, while the sun and moon and 11 stars also made obeisance to him. This was the light which shone upon Joseph’s early days, the star of prophecy which afterwards gilded his darkest moments and cheered him on while he endured affliction.

You may rest assured, Brothers and Sisters, that wherever God gives extraordinary gifts or Graces and appoints an extraordinary career, He also appoints unusual trial. There is a verse—I think it is Cowper’s— which says that—

*“The path of sorrow, and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*

To eminence of any desirable kind there is no royal road—we must wade through tribulation to it. For Joseph to become Prime Minister of Egypt, the path lay through the prison house—to all true honor the road is difficult. Expect, then, dear Friend, if God gifts you, or if He graces you, that He intends to try you. Such a reflection will tone down your exultation and prevent its degenerating into pride—and it will aid you to gird up the loins of your mind and stand in all sobriety, prepared for that which awaits you.

Look upon talents, graces and high hopes of eminent usefulness as signs of inevitable tribulation. Do not congratulate yourself and sing, “Soul, take your ease! You are happy in possessing such special gifts,” but prepare to do the lifework to which you are called. You are favored of the

Lord, but do not look for the happiness of ease, carnal enjoyment and human approval, for, “Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.”

Joseph’s worst trial happened to him when he was accused of attempting a foul assault upon his mistress. Who would not writhe under so horrible a charge? When he was put in prison and his feet were made fast with fetters, he became exceedingly troubled, so that the iron surrounded his soul. How long he was in “durance vile,” as a chained prisoner, we do not know, but it must have been a considerable period. And during those dreary months, thoughts of his father and his fond love, memories of his cruel brothers and reflections upon his sad lot must have keenly wounded him. He was pained to remember how much his character had suffered from a woman’s malicious falsehood and most of all, how much blasphemy the heathen had poured upon the name of God, whom he had represented in the house of Potiphar.

Do you wonder that the iron entered into his soul? The word of the Lord tried him very severely. Alone, in darkness, in an uncomfortable cell, his limbs fretted with chains, no one to speak to him, everyone condemning him as guilty of the basest treachery towards the man who had made him his confidential and favored servant—he found himself regarded as the offscouring of all things—and the object of ridicule to all who were about him. “The archers sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.”

But, blessed be God, his bow abode in strength and he overcame at the last! This morning we will commune together upon the trials of Joseph and our own afflictions. Our first reflections shall be spent upon the importance of trial. Secondly, we will consider the peculiarity of the Believer’s trial for, “the word of the Lord tried him.” And thirdly, we will observe the continuance and the conclusion of the trial—“until the time that his word came.” May the ever blessed Spirit direct our meditations.

I. First, let us dwell upon THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIAL. The Lord might easily have taken every one of us home to Heaven the moment we were converted. Certainly His Omnipotence was equal to the task of our immediate perfect sanctification. If the dying thief was rendered fit to be in Paradise the same day on which he believed, so might each one of us have been made ready to enter Heaven. But it has not so pleased God. We doubt not that there are myriads before the eternal Throne who have reached the abode of bliss without treading the winepress of affliction—

*“Babes there caught from womb and breast, Claim right to sing above the rest;  
Because they found the happy shore,  
They never saw nor sought before.”*

Theirs is a victory for which they never fought. They wear a crown though they never bore a cross. To Sovereign Grace these blessed ones will never cease to ascribe their bliss. But as for those of us who live to riper years, it will be written concerning all of us as of others who have gone before, “These are they who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” But why is it so appointed? Is this discipline of any use to us? The word here used is, in itself, a light upon the question, “The word of the Lord assayed him”—that would be the correct translation.

The word of the Lord assayed Joseph as gold is assayed—it is a term best understood at the mint and among refiners. Trial in the Christian Church is the Lord’s refining pot which is never off the fire. It has this excellent effect that it separates the precious from the vile. As long as the Church exists I suppose she will have traitors among her number, for if Judas intruded under the watchful eye of the Chief Shepherd, we may be pretty sure that many a Judas will elude the far less watchful eyes of the minor shepherds.

Because trial and persecution test men’s professions, they are used as the winnowing fan in the Lord’s hand, as it is written, “He will thoroughly purge His floor.” In persecution, the mere professors, the camp-followers and hangers-on, soon flee away, for they have no heart for true religion when the profession of it involves a cross. They could walk with Jesus in silver slippers, but they cannot travel with Him when His bleeding feet go barefoot over the world’s rough ways. So they depart, every man to his own, and we may say of them, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

So that trial as a permanent institution is of much service to the Church in promoting her purity and we are bound to praise the Lord whose fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem. A similar process goes on in the individual soul. No Christian man is all that he thinks he is— our purest gold is alloyed. We have, none of us, so much faith as we impute to ourselves, nor as much patience, or humility, or meekness, or love to God, or love to men. Spurious coin swells our apparent wealth. It is amazing how rich and increased in goods we are till the Lord deals with us by a trial—and then, full often, we discover that we are naked, poor and miserable in the very respects in which we boasted ourselves!

Oh, man, if you are a child of God, you are like a house which He is building with gold, silver and precious stones! But by reason of your old nature you are mixing up with the Divine material much of your own wood, hay and stubble. Therefore the fire is made to rage around you to burn out this injurious stuff which mars the whole fabric! If the Holy Spirit is pleased to bless your afflictions to you, then will you be daily led to put away the materials of the old nature with deep abhorrence and repentance! And thus shall the true world which He has built upon the sure foundation stand in its true beauty and you shall be built for eternity.

Every good man is not only tested by trial, but is the better for it. To the evil man, affliction brings evil. He rebels against the Lord and, like Pharaoh, his heart is hardened. But to the Christian it is good to be afflicted, for, when sanctified by the Spirit, trial is a means of instruction to him second to none in value. The rod of God teaches us more than all the voices of His ministers. When the Christian has been passed through the fire, the assaying, by removing the dross, adds a new luster to the gold.

Brothers and Sisters, you are not what you shall be, nor can you be what you shall be except through a measure of trial. Child, it is necessary for you to feel the weight of your Father’s hand, or you will never behave

yourself as a man. You must see His face veiled with frowns and hear His voice in harshness chiding you for your transgressions, otherwise you will always retain the follies of childhood. Our chastisements are our promotions. They are privileges more precious than the rights of princes. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” Joseph could say this—and all the Lord’s Josephs either acknowledge it now or will have to admit it hereafter.

Let us look a little more closely and we shall see that trial did much for Joseph. First, it corrected the juvenile errors of the past. Far be it from me to find any fault with so admirable a youthful character. But it was youthful and needed maturing. As a simple-hearted, trustful child, he certainly told his dreams quite as freely as it was not wise to have done. Perhaps he thought that his brothers and his father would have been as gratified as himself. But even his father rebuked him and his brothers were indignant to the last degree!

It was natural that a boy of 17 should be pleased with the thought of power and eminence, but such a feeling might have gendered evil and, therefore, it needed to be toned down and its eager expression kept within bounds. We find Joseph more self-possessed and more reticent, by-andby, and we read in later life that he restrained himself—yes, when the strongest passions were at work within him, and his own brother, Benjamin, was before him—he sacrificed his feelings to the dictates of prudence.

We see no more boyish exultation, no more telling of his dreams. In quietness and confidence he found his strength. This, he no doubt, learned amid the sorrows of his prison house. He was, perhaps, in his early days, too much in a hurry to realize the promised blessing. He would see the sheaves do obeisance to his sheaf at once, while he and his brothers were as yet but green corn and the harvest had not come. He thought the dream was being realized, no doubt, when that princely garment his father gave him, was put upon him and he began, in some measure, to exercise the dignity which the Lord had promised him by reporting his brothers to his father. I do not condemn this action, but it, no doubt, made his brothers feel that he took too much upon himself since they were, many of them, old enough to have been his father and they had families of their own.

At any rate, he had not learned, then, as he had to learn afterwards, during 13 weary years, that visions tarry and that we must wait for them, since the promise is not for today nor for tomorrow, but abides until it reaches ripeness. God promises us great things which we see not, as yet, and therefore we must, with patience, wait for them—we must not put on the coat of many colors yet, nor be hasty to rebuke our elder brothers—for we are not yet set on high by the hand of the Lord. Joseph had his royal coat in due time and he had the fullest conceivable opportunity for reproving his brothers when, in later days they went down into Egypt to buy corn and their hearts smote them for all the wrong that they had done to him.  
In prison Joseph learned to wait. I do not know a harder or more valuable lesson. It is worthwhile to suffer slander and to feel the fret of fetters, to acquire the patience which sits still and knows that Jehovah is God! To tarry awhile and not to pluck our fruit while it is yet green and sour—this is rare wisdom. To be instructed to leave the time as well as the form of the blessing in the hands of God is to have been to school with the best result! Joseph also learned in his trial much that was good for present use. For instance, he found by sweet experience that the Divine Presence can cheer us anywhere. If he had always been at home with his father, always his father’s darling, he would have known that the love of God is sweet to a favored youth, but no one would have been astonished at that. Even Satan would have said, “Well may he rejoice in You, O Lord. Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has?”

But he learned that God could be with him when he was sold for the price of a slave! That He could be with him when led as a captive across the desert, when he walked wearily by the camel’s side with the Ishmaelites. He was blessed with His Presence as He was with him in the slave mart, to find him a master who might appreciate him. He was with him when he became a servant in the house, by blessing him, prospering him and causing him to find favor in the eyes of his master till he became overseer of all that Potiphar had! And then, best of all, though some would say worst of all, he learned that God could be with him in a dungeon. He could not have known that if he had stayed at home—he must be brought into the thick darkness—that the brightness of the Divine Presence might be the more fully seen!

There is nothing in this world so delightful as the light of God’s Countenance when all around is dark. You may tell me that the Presence of Jesus is glorious upon Tabor’s glorious mount and I will not contradict you, though I have realized the poet’s words—

*“At the too transporting light*

*Darkness rushes over my sight.”*  
But give me the soft subdued light of God’s love in adversity. Christ on the stormy waters for me! Christ in the midst of the furnace with His persecuted ones! Never does the Lord’s love taste so sweet as when all the world is wormwood and gall. See how the mother presses her dear babe to her bosom when it is sick, or has had a bone broken. The little one may run about the house at other times and the mother is pleased with it and loves it, but if you want to see all her tenderness, if you would read all her heart, you should see her when it scarcely breathes, when she fears that every moment will be its last.

Then all the mother is revealed. How she fondles it and what a store of sweet words she brings forth. So, if you would see all of God, you must know what deeps of trouble mean, for then the great heart, the glorious, infinite love comes welling over and the soul is filled with all the fullness of God! It was worthwhile, I say, for Joseph to be falsely accused and to be laid in irons, to learn

 experimentally the supporting power of the heavenly Father’s smile. There, too, Joseph learned that temporal things are not to be depended upon. The indulgences of his father’s house ended in his being sold as a slave and the coat of many colors dipped in blood. His prosperity in the house of Potiphar also came to a sudden end—and from being an overseer he became a prisoner in irons!

Now he knew that earthly good is not to be depended on and, therefore, not worthy to be the object of pursuit to an immortal soul. He sees that all things beneath the moon change, waxing and waning as does the moon herself, and he learns to look to something higher and more stable than circumstances and surroundings. Here, too, he was instructed in one sad truth which we are all so slow to learn, namely, to, “cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

I do not think Joseph had learned that fully when he interpreted the dream of the butler. It was very natural and, therefore, not to be censured that he should say, “Think of me when it shall be well with you.” But when two whole years had passed and all the while he was forgotten, Joseph must have felt that, “Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” He ceased from man and no longer looked for enlargement from that quarter. Cost us what it may, we are great gainers by any process which enables us to say, “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” It is a blessed thing when Providence knocks away all the blocks and lets the vessel launch into her true element. See how freely she floats upon the deep sea of God’s everlasting love and immutable faithfulness! She is no more liable to decay from the dry rot of carnal confidence, but on the broad sea of Divine power, “she walks the waters as a thing of life” in joyful reliance upon the ever blessed God! Confidence in man seems bred in our bones, but it must be taken out of us—and happy shall the day be which sees us rid of all hope but that which stays itself upon the Lord, alone.

But, dear Brothers and Sisters, the chief use of trial to Joseph and to us is very often seen in our future lives. While Joseph was tried in prison, God’s great objective was to prepare him for the government which awaited him. It was designed, first, to give him power to bear power—a rare acquirement. Solomon says, “As the fining pot to silver, and the furnace to gold, so is a man to his praise.” Many a man can bear affliction, but few men can endure prosperity. And I have marked it and you must have marked it, too, that the most perilous thing in all the world is to step suddenly from obscurity into power.

Have we not seen men, illiterate and unknown, suddenly introduced to the Christian pulpit and made much of? And has it not frequently turned out that their names have been, by-and-by, prudently forgotten, for they were overthrown by the dizzy heights to which they were lifted? It is far better that a man should fight his way up to his position, that he should be assailed by enemies and distrusted by friends and should pass through a probationary career. Even then, he can only stand as the Lord holds him, but without it, he is in terrible peril. Therefore the Apostle says, “not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

If I knew that some young man here present would be greatly owned of God in the future and become, in future, a prince in our Israel. If, by lifting up this finger I could screen him from fierce criticism, misrepresentation and abuse, I would not do it because, severe as the ordeal might be to him, I am persuaded it is necessary that he should pass through it in order to make him able to bear the giddy heights of the position for which God intends him. Joseph on the throne of Egypt! I know not what he might have been if first of all he had not been laid in the stocks. His feet learned to stand fast on a throne through having been set fast in a dungeon!

His gold chain was worn without pride because he had worn a chain of iron! And he was fit to be the ruler of princes because he had, himself, been a servant among prisoners. Through his trial, God gave him power to bear power—and this is a far rarer gift than the power to endure oppression and contempt! Joseph was also trained to bear the other dangers of prosperity. These are neither few nor small. Great riches and high positions are not to be desired. Agur’s prayer is a wise one—“Give me neither poverty nor riches.” Joseph was in great peril when he came to be lord over the land of Egypt, but during his time in prison he had been learning to spell out a mystery and answer a riddle.

Practically, his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream was what he had been learning in prison, namely, that it is idle to boast of the fat cattle since the lean cattle can soon eat them up. And it is unwise to be proud of the full ears, because the withered ears can soon devour them. Pharaoh saw in the dream the lean devouring the full-fleshed, but Joseph, alone, understood it. He saw his fat cattle, when he was in his father’s house, eaten up when he was sold as a slave. He saw his full ears, when he was in Potiphar’s house, devoured by the withered ears when he was thrown into prison. And he now knew that there was nothing here below worth our relying upon, since on the chariot of all earthly good there rides a Nemesis and every day is followed by a night.

He was tutored to be a ruler, for he had learned the prisoner’s side of politics and felt how hard it was for men to be unjustly condemned without trial. He foresaw that this could not be forever endured and that one day the long-suffering lean cattle would be goaded to fury and would eat up the fat ones that oppressed them. Hence Joseph’s rule would be just and generous, for in this he would see the elements which would preserve law and order and prevent the poorer sort from overturning everything. In the prison, too, he had learned to speak out. His whole course had been a rehearsal fitting him to be bravely truthful before the king.

What temptation was there to him, when he stood before Pharaoh, to conceal his faith in God? To him, I say, who had risked life and lost liberty for God’s sake? It would have been a very great temptation to an ordinary young man not to say anything about the one God in the presence of the head of the Egyptian superstitions—but this did not suggest itself to Joseph. Had he confessed his God in Potiphar’s house? Did he not say to Potiphar’s wicked wife, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God”? He had stood to his God in prison and told the butler and baker that “interpretations belong unto God.” And now he stands before Pharaoh! He does not flinch for a moment, but he says, “God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

Why, Brothers and Sisters, have you ever thought of the moral courage of Joseph in interpreting that dream? All the soothsayers there had tried to interpret it and could not—was it likely the heathen king would believe

a youth who had been a slave and was fresh brought from a dungeon? When he foretold seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, it was a marvel that Pharaoh believed him! If the narrative had gone on to say, “Then the king said unto his servants, cast this man into prison and feed him with the bread of affliction and the water of affliction until we see whether his word shall come to pass,” we should not have been at all surprised.

The magicians, naturally enough, would be ready to say that he was set on to give this preposterous interpretation by persons interested in selling corn! Or else they would urge that a man who dared to foretell events so utterly improbable had better be sent back to his prison house. But Joseph believed the Word of the Lord and he spoke with the accent of conviction and Pharaoh believed him. Where did this simple-minded courage come from? From where came this boldness? It was the right royal valor which surrounds a virtuous soul—or rather the fearlessness which follows from the fear of God!

He stood forth and delivered his message and the Lord established his word. He had been preparing for this in the day of his sorrow. Like a good sword blade, he had been passed through the fire and through the fire again, that now he might not fail in the day of battle! Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, may you gain as much from tribulations as Joseph did and you will if the Holy Spirit sanctifies them to you.

II. We must pass on, secondly, to notice THE PECULIARITY OF THE TRIAL. According to the text, “the Word of the Lord tried him.” This might have escaped our observation if the Spirit of God had not placed it upon record. “The Word of the Lord tried him.” How was that? Potiphar tried him and the chains tried him, but did the Word of the Lord try him? Yes. But there is a previous question—how did he receive any Word of the Lord? There was no Bible, then! Moses had not lived, there was not even the book of Genesis—what Word of God had he? The answer is his dreams were to him the Word of God, for they were communications from Heaven.

The instruction he received from his father was also the Word of God to him. His knowledge of the Covenant which God had made with Abraham and Isaac, and his father, Jacob, was God’s Word to him. Moreover, the secret teachings of the Holy Spirit quickened his conscience and afforded him light on the way. When there was no written Word, the Divine Spirit spoke without words, impressing truth upon the heart itself! All these were to Joseph the Word of God. How did it try him? It tried him thus— the Word said to him in his conscience, “You shall not commit adultery.” Without that Word he would not have been tried, for Nature suggested compliance with his mistress’s desires. The pleasure of ease, of wealth, of favor were to be had through that woman’s smile, but the Word of God came in and said, “You shall not,” and Joseph was tried.

The test, however, he could bear—Divine Grace enabled him to flee youthful lusts and to cry, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” The trial which arose out of his innocence must have again tested him by the Word of God. There he is in prison—for what? Why, for an action so pure, that had he been set on a throne for it, he would have well deserved it! Do you not think that many questions perplexed him while he lay in prison? Would not the evil spirit say, “Were you not a fool, after all? Do you not think that your chastity was mere superstition?” Thus would the purity of his heart be tried and the Word of God would search him and test his hatred of sin. Would not the Word of God try his constancy as it asked, “Do you now believe?”

What problems were put before him—Is there a moral governor of the universe? If so, why does He allow the innocent to suffer? Why am I in fetters and the lewd woman in favor? Could not an Omnipotent God deliver me? Why, then, does He leave me here? Could Joseph, in the face of such questions, still cling to the faithful Word? He could and he did! But the Word tried him and proved his constancy, his faith and his integrity! Then, too, the Word of the Lord which he had heard many years before would come to him and try him.

His trembling heart would ask, “Has God ever spoken to you at all? Those dreams, were they not childish? That voice which you thought you heard in your heart, was it not imagination? This Providence of God which has prospered you wherever you have gone, was it not, after all, good luck? Has the living God ever revealed Himself to one, who, at length became a slave? Look at your fetters and ask if you can be His child?” And then, I suspect that during the time in which Joseph was fettered, the Word of God had ceased to speak to him as of old. He did not dream nor interpret dreams and that seems to have been the special way in which the Lord revealed Himself to him.

Brother, do you know what it is to be tried by the cessation of comfortable communications? Did you ever live for a time without feeling any text of Scripture applied to your soul, without beholding any vivid flashes of the Divine light, or any streaming in of the Spirit’s power through the Word of God? If you have been so afflicted, you have been tempted to enquire, “Did the Lord ever speak to me at all? Have I been truly converted or is it, after all, a myth? And these things which I have looked upon as communications from Heaven, have they been, after all, nothing but the vapors of a heated brain?” The Word of God tried him and he had to weigh himself in the balances of the sanctuary.

The bright promise of future good would also try him. His fears would say, “How is it possible that your brothers should pay homage to you? You are far away from your family and cannot hope to see them again—as for the sheaves that did obeisance to your sheaf—where are they? You are shut up and cannot come forth! Within these walls the jealous Potiphar has doomed you to die.” The Word of God would say to him, then, “Can you believe Me? Can you trust the Lord to fulfill His promises?” Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, it is easy for us to talk about this, but if we had to pass through the same ordeal, lying in a dungeon under an accusation of guilt which we abhorred, far away from all we loved, we might feel the Word of God to be a very trying thing!

And perhaps the dark thought might even flit across our spirit, “Would God I had never heard that Word but could have lived as the Egyptians do, for then I might have been dwelling in pleasure in Potiphar’s house. But this Word of God—into what trials has it dragged me—into what difficulties has it thrown me! Is it, after all, worthwhile to know it?” I remember once being very, very ill and a man who had no godliness, but who was full of wicked wit, accosted me thus. “Ah, you see, whom the Lord loves He chastens.” “Yes,” I said, “I am suffering greatly.” “Well,” he said with a sneer, “I can do very well without such love, so long as I get off such chastening.” I burst into tears and my very soul boiled over as I cried, “If the Lord were to grind me to powder, I would accept it at His hands so that I might but have His love. It is you who need to be pitied, for sound as your health may be and merry as you look, you are a poor creature since you have missed the only thing worth living for.”

I let fly a volley at him, I could not help it. I felt forced to stand up for my Master. Joseph took the Lord’s yoke upon him gladly and found rest unto his soul. He counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the luxuries of Potiphar’s house. Thus the Word tried him and he was found upright. I have no doubt the Word of the Lord tried Joseph in this way. That Word seemed to say, “You thought you loved your father’s God, Joseph. Do you love Him now? You have lost your father’s house. You have forfeited the ease of Potiphar’s household. You have sacrificed your liberty and, perhaps, the next thing will be that you will be taken out to die! Can you still hold fast to the Lord?”

Joseph was firm in his allegiance and prepared to follow the Lord at all hazards to the death. The Word had come to him and it tried his steadfastness. I may be addressing some young men who are getting into all sorts of trouble through being Christians. I congratulate you! Thus does the Lord train His bravest soldiers. I may be addressing some of you older men who are passing through storms of trial mainly because you hold fast your integrity. I congratulate you! Rejoice in this day and leap for joy, for you are only enduring trials which have fallen to the lot of better men than yourselves! Men do not put base metal into the furnace—they spend their assaying upon precious gold. I see in the fact of your trial, some evidence of your value, and I congratulate you, my Brothers and Sisters, and pray the Lord to bear you up and bear you through, that like Joseph you may be of great service to Israel and bring glory to God!

III. The last thought is THE CONTINUANCE AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL. Trial does not last forever. Cheer up, the tide ebbs out, but the flood will return again. Note the word, “until.” He who counts the stars also numbers your sorrows and if He ordains the number 10, your trials will never be eleven. The text says, “until,” for the Lord appoints the bounds of the proud waters and they shall no more go over your soul when they reach the boundary of the Divine “until.” “Until the time that his word came”—the same Word which tried Joseph in due time set him free.

If the Lord gives the turnkey permission to keep us in prison, there we must remain until He sends a guarantee for our liberation. And then all the devils in Hell cannot hold us in bondage for an instant longer. My dear Brothers and Sisters, I want you, in your troubles, to look entirely to God whose Word is a Word of power. He speaks and it is done! He has spoken trouble to you, but He can just as readily speak comfort to you. Never mind what the butler’s word is. Do not entreat him, saying, “When it is well with you, speak a word for me.” The butler’s word will not be useful, it is Jehovah’s Word you need, for “where the word of a king is there is power.”

It is a blessed thing to know that trouble comes directly from God, whatever the secondary agent may be. You must not say, “I could have borne it if it had not been for that wicked woman.” Never mind the wicked woman, look to God as overruling her malice and everything else. He sends the trial and therefore look to Him to deliver you from it—

*“‘Tis He that lifts our comforts high,  
Or sinks them in the grave.”*

He shuts us up in prison and He brings us out again. The time was in God’s hands and it was very wisely ordered. Suppose that the butler had thought of Joseph and had spoken to Pharaoh about the interpretation of his dream? The probabilities are that when the courtiers of Pharaoh’s court heard it, they would have made the halls of the palace ring with laughter! And the magicians, especially, would have poured scorn on the idea that a slave boy who had been imprisoned for scandalous behavior knew more about interpreting dreams than the wise men of Egypt who had been brought up to the art and had gained high degrees in the profession!

It would have been a theme of ridicule all over the land! It was the wrong time and God would not let the butler remember, because that recollection would have marred the plot and spoiled the whole business. But God’s, “until,” came at the nick of time when Joseph was ready for court and when Pharaoh was ready to appreciate Joseph. The hour needed its man and here was the hour for the man. The straight way from the dungeon to the throne was not open until Pharaoh dreamed his dream—then must Joseph come forth, and not before. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, sit still and wait! The deliverance you are craving for is not yet ripe—wait while the Word tries you, for that same Word will, in due, time set you free!

The Word set him free in a way which cleared his character, for never a whisper would be raised against him, and Potiphar would know the truth, even if he had not already guessed it. It set him free in a way which secured his eminence and gave him the means of providing for his father and his household. He might have been liberated from prison earlier and have remained only a common person, or gone back to be a slave to some new master. But now his liberation secured his emancipation from slavery and set him in the position which enabled him to provide for his father and his family in the land of Goshen. And so the sheaves did homage to his sheaf and the sun and moon and 11 stars fulfilled the vision which he had seen so many years before!

You see, Brethren, there is a time of deliverance and the time is fixed by God—and it is a right time! Therefore we have quietly to wait for it. Does not the farmer wait for the precious fruits of the earth? And will you not tarry for the fruits of the promise? Be not impetuous. Hush those murmuring thoughts! Never allow rash expressions to escape your lips. Bear on, young man, bear on! Yes, and you gray-headed man, bear on, bear on! The anvil breaks the hammers in the long run! Bear on, bear on! The rock breaks the billows and is not, itself, broken. Bear the trials which come to you from God and from His Word with joy and patience, for the end is

not yet—but when it comes, it shall be everlasting joy!

I think I hear some saying all round the place, “Ah, I see these Believers are a very tried people! Who would wish to be one of them?” Listen, Friend, and I will tell you something! Joseph was not the only person in prison, and the righteous are not the only people who are afflicted. The chief butler was in prison and the chief baker, too. I wonder whether the butler and baker are here, looking sad today. If so, there is this difference between them and Joseph, that the Lord is not with them, but He is with Joseph and that makes a vast difference, for—

*“Stone walls do not a prison make,*

*Nor iron bars a cage.”*  
If God is in the prison with Joseph, Joseph is happy, but it is not so with you tried worldlings. I wonder, O butler and baker, whether you have had any dreams? I wonder what has passed through your minds this morning? Why do you look so sad today?

I am no interpreter of dreams, but perhaps I can unriddle yours. Was a vine before you in your dream? That true and living vine? Did it bud and blossom and bring forth fruit before your eyes? And did you take of its clusters and present its pure blood to the King? If so, you will be set free— your dream means salvation—for there is a vine of the Lord’s own planting whose wine makes glad the heart of man. And he who takes of its living fruit is accepted. Do you know how to take those clusters and to squeeze them out? If so, the King will rejoice in you, for nothing is so dear to Him as the fruit of the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus!

But have you dreamed of cakes which you have made by your own skill? Not fruits from a vine, living and full, but mere cakes, sweetened with your own self-righteousness, baked in the oven of your own zeal and industry? And do you hope to set these before the King? The birds of the air already peck at them! You are beginning, now, to feel that your works are not altogether what you thought them to be! Oh, if this is your dream, I tremble for you, for you will come to an ill end! I pray the Lord put that dream from you and teach you something better.

Salvation is of the Lord! Whether for butler, or baker, or Joseph— redemption is by Jesus, only! Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength and they that trust in Him will never be ashamed or confounded, world without end. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Genesis 39:1-7, 21-23; 40:1-8, 23; 12:1-9.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—214, 750, 764.

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A STANZA OF DELIVERANCE  
NO. 2241

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 31, 1892, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 31, 1890.

**“He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”  
Psalm 105:37.**

THIS verse has been making music in my heart for several days and, at times, it has even claimed utterance from my tongue. I have caught myself singing a solo, with myself as the only hearer, and this has been the theme, “He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” I love texts which sing to me and make me join in! If this verse should get into your hearts and set you singing in a similar way, you will be entertaining a very pleasant visitor— and it will brighten a dark day for you!

Egypt may very fairly represent those states of sorrow and sadness, depression and oppression, into which God’s people come far too frequently. Specially is the house of bondage a true picture of our condition when we are convicted of sin, but are ignorant of the way to escape from its guilt and power! Then, sin, which was once our Goshen of pleasure, becomes our iron furnace of fear. Though we yield to sin when under conviction, yet we are no longer its willing subjects—we feel that we are slaves and we sigh by reason of sore bondage. Glory be to God, He has now brought us out from that state of slavery, and we can sing of freedom given by His own right hand!

Since then we have been permitted, in the order of God’s Providence, to live among evil persons who have had power over us and have used it maliciously. They have hated our God and, therefore, they have hated us, and shown their dislike of us in many harsh and exacting ways. We find no rest with them, but our soul is among lions. They seem as though they would devour us, or else frighten us from following the road to Heaven.

Full often has our gracious God delivered His persecuted people from such a sorrowful condition and brought them into a large room wherein He has made them happy with Christian fellowship and enabled them to go about holy work without let or hindrance. At such times, when God’s people have come out from under the yoke of their oppressors, the Lord has “brought them forth, also, with silver and gold: and there has not been one feeble person among their tribes.”

It is possible to go down into Egypt by reason of our own depression of spirit, inward conflict and despondency. If you are like the preacher, you are by no means a stranger to inward sinking. Though you do not give up your faith, but are, still, like father Jacob, keeping your hold while the sinew is shrinking, yet you are, “sorely broken in the place of dragons.” You feel that you are like that bush in the desert which burned with fire and, only through a miracle, was not consumed. When under temptations of the flesh and memories of old sins, Satan, himself, comes in with his fiery darts, and you have a hard time of it. He will insinuate dark and dreadful thoughts—and you will be haunted by them, day after day—till you feel like the poor Israelites under the lash of the Egyptian taskmaster. Your covenant with God will bring you out of that state of anguish and distress—and when He does so, you will sing—“He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

God forbid we should repeat that senseless and wicked trust in man which once made us do down into Egypt for help! We will not go there for pleasure—what have we to do with drinking the waters of the muddy river? We drink of a better river than the Nile, even of the river of the Water of Life! But we shall go to the region of weakness and pain to die. Unless the Lord should suddenly come in His Glory, we shall close our eyes in death as Jacob and Joseph did. Then when we go into the tomb, which will be a kind of Egypt for our body, we shall only tarry there for a season. We shall slumber for a while, each one in his bed of dust, but the trumpet of the archangel shall awaken us and our bodies shall rise again! We shall not, however, come from the grave so poor and feeble as we went in! No, we shall be great gainers by our sojourn in the dark abode. Those who see the saints in the day of Resurrection, ascending to their thrones from the Egypt of death, may fitly say, “He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

I am going to try to handle my very delightful subject in the following way—First, the deliverances of God’s people are always worked by Divine Power. Lay the stress on the first word—“HE brought them forth.” Secondly, their deliverances are attended with enrichment. “He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.” And, thirdly, their deliverances are accompanied by a remarkable degree of strength. “There was not one feeble person among their tribes.” May the Holy Spirit make rare music for you upon this harp of three strings!

I. First, then, when we are led out of the Egypt of our sorrow, OUR DELIVERANCE IS BY DIVINE POWER. When Israel came out of Egypt, it was Jehovah who brought forth her armies. When any man is saved from spiritual bondage, it is the Lord Jesus who loosens the captive. Some little time ago I delivered an address at the Mildmay Park Conference upon, “Following Jesus in the dark,” and the Lord was pleased to bless that word to a great many who were then under a cloud. For this cause, I greatly rejoice, but from this happy result I have also had to suffer many things in the following way—it seems as if persons everywhere, having read that address, must write to me an account of their trouble, despondency and darkness of the soul.

Having written the doleful narrative, they very naturally ask me endless questions by way of trying to find light for themselves out of my experience and knowledge. I have been delighted to answer those questions as far as I can, but there is a limit to human power. I have lately been like a doctor who has suddenly had a new practice handed over to him, when he was already as busy as he could be, both night and day! He finds his door besieged by patients who cannot be dismissed with just a word of hope and a dose of medicine, but require a long time in which to tell their griefs and to receive their comfort. Spiritually, my night bell is always ringing— and when I visit a sick soul, it requires long and weary nursing. I know, therefore, from that, as well as from my own experience, that if ever a man is delivered from spiritual bondage of heart, it is not by any easy work, or by a hasty word.

No, all the power of sympathy and experience will fail with some souls. God, alone, can take away the iron when it enters into the soul! It is of small use for those afflicted in mind to write to me, or to others, if their distress is spiritual, for only God can deliver them. If they are in the dark, we can strike a match as well as anyone else—but since they need the shining of the Sun—that remains with the Lord who alone creates the light. Oh, that the Sun of Righteousness would rise with healing beneath His wings on every soul that now sits in the midnight of despair! Deliverance from a cruel captivity, like that of Israel in Egypt, must be worked by the hand and outstretched arm of Jehovah, alone! When such a liberation is performed, then do we rapturously sing, “HE brought them forth!”

But this does not exclude the use of means . The Lord used Moses and Aaron—and Moses used his rod and his tongue. Truly, Jehovah brought forth Israel, and neither Moses nor Aaron nor the rod in Moses’ hand, but yet the Lord’s instruments were employed in the service. If the Lord delivers you, my dear afflicted Friends, the work will not be done by the preacher, not by a consoling book, nor by any other means so as to prevent its being the Lord, alone! The use of instrumentality does not hide Divine Power, but even makes it more apparent! The man Moses was not only very meek, but he was also so slow in speech that he needed Aaron’s help—yet the Lord used him! Aaron was even inferior to Moses, but the Lord used him! As for the rod, it was probably nothing more than a hazel stick which had been used by Moses in walking and keeping sheep—but it pleased the Lord to make of that rod a very remarkable use, so that no scepter of kings was ever so greatly honored! The Lord took care to employ means which could not pretend to share the honor with Himself. Notwithstanding Moses, Aaron and the rod, “HE brought them forth,” and HE, alone!

This work of the Lord does not exclude the action of the will. The people of Israel came forth freely from the country which had become the house of bondage. “He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness.” They set out exultingly, glad to escape from the intolerable oppression of Pharaoh who was, to them, a tyrant, indeed! God does not violate the human will when He saves men—they are not converted against their will, but their will, itself, is converted! The Lord has a way of entering the heart, not with a crowbar, like a burglar, but with a master key which He gently inserts in the lock and the bolt flies back—the door opens and He enters! The Lord brought Israel forth, but they had cried unto the Lord by reason of their sore bondage, and they did not receive the blessing without the desiring it, yes, and sighing for it! And when it came, they joyfully accepted it and willingly trusted themselves with him whom the Lord had made to be their mediator and leader, even Moses. They did not share the honor of their deliverance with God, but still they gave their hearty assent and consent to His salvation. Willingly as they were to move, it was still true, “HE brought them forth.”

Brothers and Sisters, he must have brought them forth, for they could never have come forth by themselves. If you have read enough of Egyptian history to understand the position and power of the reigning Pharaohs, you will know how impossible it was for a mob of slaves, like the Israelites, to make headway against the imperious monarch and his absolute power. If they had clamored and rebelled, the only possible result would have been to slaughter many—and the still further enslavement of the rest. There was no hope for the most distinguished Israelite against the tyranny of the Pharaoh! He could simply cry, “Get you unto your burdens,” and they could do no less. Pharaoh crushed even his own Egyptians—much more the strangers! You cannot look upon the pyramids and other vast buildings along the Nile and remember that all these were built with unpaid labor, with the whip continually at the workman’s back— without feeling that a pastoral, unarmed race, long held in servitude— could ever have obtained deliverance from the power of Pharaohs if the Omnipotent Jehovah had not espoused their cause. “HE brought them forth!”

Beloved, we can never escape from the bondage of sin by our own power. Our past guilt and the condemnation consequent thereon, have locked us up in a dungeon, whose bars we can never break! The Prince of Darkness, also, has such power over our evil natures that we cannot overcome him, or escape from under his dominion of ourselves. If we are ever set free from sin and Satan, it will be eternally and infinitely true that the Lord brought us forth out of the house of bondage. “Salvation is of the Lord.”

Moreover, the spirit of the people was too crushed to have dared to come forth, even if they could have achieved liberty by a brave revolt. Four hundred years of slavery had ground the very spirit out of the men of Israel. They toiled, they toiled, they toiled—and when Moses came and talked to them about freedom, at first they listened and they hoped—but in a few hours they began to murmur and to complain of Moses and to cry—“Leave us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians.” That abject condition was ours before conversion! We were not easily awakened to seek redemption. I remember hearing the Gospel and getting a little comfort from it and, almost immediately, falling back into my former hopelessness. And I said in my soul, “I may as well enjoy the pleasures of sin while I can, for I am doomed to perish for my iniquities.” The slavery of sin takes away manliness and courage from the spirit—and where bright hope smiles upon us, we answer her with the sullen silence of despair!

Was it not so with you, my Brothers and Sisters, in those gloomy days? Therefore, it must be true, that if the prisoners of sin have some forth, the Lord, Himself, brought them forth. They had not the spirit of men who could dare to care about their freedom—they were too enfeebled by their own servile spirit. There may be some before me, at this moment, before whom God has set an open door and yet they dare not go through it. Christ is put before you—you may have Him for your trusting—you may have Him at once! But you dare not take Him. You are commanded to believe, but you dare not believe what you know to be true! You hear us sing the hymn—

*“Only trust Him, only trust Him,*

*Only trust Him now,”*  
but you dare not trust the Lord Jesus, though this is your only hope of obtaining salvation! Your sin has left you paralyzed with despair! O God,

bring forth these prisoners, even now! Though they lie in the inner prison, with their feet fast in the stocks, may it be said on earth and sung in Heaven, “HE brought them forth!”

Yet the Lord did bring them forth . Not in part, but as a whole, He redeemed His people. Every one of them was set free! Not only all the human beings, but all their cattle came forth, according to the Word of the Lord, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” Christ Jesus, in redeeming His people, will have all or none! All that the Father gave Him shall come to Him! Nor shall the power of sin, death and Hell be able to hold in captivity one whom Jesus has effectually redeemed, nor one whom His Father chose! All the covenanted ones shall be His in the day when He makes up His jewels. He has paid too much for them to lose one of them! In the loss of one of them, too much would be involved—His Word, His Covenant, His power, His faithfulness, His honor would all suffer should one of His little ones perish! Therefore, He makes their deliverance effectual and in every deed He brings them forth.

This deliverance came when the lamb was slain . Pharaoh held Israel captive during all the plagues, but he could not go beyond a certain point. On that same night when they saw the lamb slain and roasted with fire while they sat in their houses protected by the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side posts of their doors—that same night they left Egypt! They went forth under that seal of redemption, the blood-red mark of substitutionary sacrifice. My dear Hearer, perhaps this very night you will also go forth into glorious liberty! I know you will, if you will, by faith, look to Jesus as the Lamb slain for you! Will you now accept Him as your own and trust Him to be your redemption? Behold, then, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! Take His precious blood and let it be sprinkled on your door, yes, and upon yourself, that the angel of vengeance may pass you by! Can you come and feed on Christ at once, as the Lamb of God’s Passover? Do you say that this would be a bold and venturesome faith? Yet be so bold and venturesome! Blessed to the name of the Lord, none were ever rejected who dared to trust Jesus! We will sing about you and others if you have faith in the great sacrifice—and this will be our song—“HE brought them forth!”

Israel cannot remain under slavery to Egypt when once the redemption price has been accepted and the blood has been sprinkled! None know freedom from sin but those who trust the atoning blood! God forbid that I should point you to any way of hope but this one path—for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins!

I have perhaps said enough on this point, but assuredly I have fallen short unless I have made you know, each one, that deliverance from sin is solely by the power of God! “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Unless a supernatural power is put forth in it, any form of deliverance from sin is worth nothing! If you have been born again from below, you will go below—you must be born again from above if you are to go above! There is no true liberty but that of which Christ makes you free. “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free, indeed.” Do you know what it is, dear Friends, to be brought out of prison by a miracle of Grace, by a revelation of the Holy Spirit, by the blood of Jesus shed for many? If so, you will join with all the saints in singing, “As for His people, HE brought them forth!”

II. But now we reach a very pleasing part of our theme, We have now to note that OUR DELIVERANCE WAS ATTENDED WITH ENRICHMENT— “He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.” “Oh,” says one, “I remember all that about that translation! That is the silver and gold which they borrowed from the Egyptians with no intent of repaying the loan. I have always though that was a thievish trick.” It was a very unfortunate mistake of our translators when they rendered the original by the word, “borrowed,” for it is not the correct word. Our Revised Version has it more accurately, “And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked.”

Even if you were forced to read the word, “borrowed,” it might mean nothing amiss, for all borrowing and nonpayment is not thieving. “Oh,” you say, “that is a new doctrine!” Let me state the case. If I borrow upon the security of my property and leave the property in the hand of the lender, he will not complain if the security is worth more than the loan. These Israelites had lands and houses and other property which they could not carry with them—and now that their sudden removal involved a forced sale—they could say to those who lived near them, “Here is our land, what will you give us for it?” The people took the immovable property of the Israelites—and they granted them a loan for it—they were well aware of what they were doing and were not defrauded. But we have no need to defend Israel. The Great Proprietor of all things bade them ask and influenced the minds of their neighbors to give! It was just that these poor people, who had been working without fee or reward and had, thereby, screened the native Egyptians from much forced labor.

The people of Egypt were, in part, afraid of them and of their God and were, also, in measure, sympathetic with them under their cruel oppression. And so they forced presents upon the Israelites hoping to get their blessing before they departed, to save them from further plague which might visit the land. The natives as good as said, “Take whatever you please from us, for we have treated you badly. Only leave us alone—for plagues and deaths fall upon us thick and fast so long as Pharaoh detains you here.” However, this is not my point. I am dealing with more spiritual things. When God brings His people out of bondage, they come out enriched in the best and most emphatic sense.

This seemed very unlikely . It looks to the afflicted as if they could not be profited by trials such as theirs. If they can only escape by the skin of their teeth, they will feel perfectly satisfied. Depressed spirits cannot lift their thought so high as to think of the gold of increased joy, or the silver of enlarged knowledge, or the jewels of holy graces. “I am,” said one, “quite prepared to sit down behind the door in Heaven, or at the feet of the least of the saints, so long as I may but get there.” In some respects this is a very proper feeling. But this is not God’s way of acting—He did not lead forth His people in a poverty-stricken way, but, “He brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.” Your Deliverer means to enrich you spiritually when He sets you free from your sorrow and trouble!

It was very far from being the design of their enemies to enrich Israel. Pharaoh had intended to work them down to the last ounce of strength and keep them in abject poverty. In fact, one chief object of his oppression was to kill down the race, lest they should too greatly multiply. But the Lord turned the curse into a blessing! “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” And the harder they worked, the healthier they became, so that “there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” This was not according to their enemies’ will, but the will of the Lord is paramount! Even so it is not the devil’s will to drive a man nearer to Christ, but yet his temptations and assaults are often used of the Lord to make the best and most experienced Christians. Satan is the dishwasher in God’s kitchen and he has to scour the vessels of mercy. Trials and afflictions, which threaten to kill us, are made to sanctify us! And sanctification is the best form of enrichment. How much we owe to sorrow and sickness, crosses and losses! Our bondage ends in our coming forth with much that is better than silver and gold!

Thus do we come forth from conviction of sin . “Now tell me,” asks one, “what does man gain by being in a desponding, sorrowful condition, convicted of sin and full of fears?” By the work of the Holy Spirit he will gain much. He will obtain a clearer knowledge of the evil of sin. This is a rare thing, nowadays, when we have so many Believers who were never penitent. It is a great thing for a child who has a habit of stealing apples, to get himself well filled with the sourest of them and feel the gripes strong within him. He will never touch such fruit anymore! It is a great thing for a man, in his early days, to know what a sour apple sin is and to feel heartache and soul-anguish because of the exceeding bitterness of his evil ways. It is a lasting lesson! As the burnt child dreads the fire and the scalded dog is afraid, even, of cold water, so the discipline of conscience, through Divine Grace, breeds a holy caution and even a hatred of sin! We have few Puritans because we have few penitents. An awful sense of guilt and an overwhelming conviction of sin may be the foundation stone of a gloriously holy character!

The tried and tempted man will also see clearly that salvation is all of Grace. He feels that if he ever rises from his despondency, he can never dare to take an atom of the honor of deliverance to himself—it must be of Free Grace only. He can do nothing and he knows it! When a child of God can spell GRACE and can pronounce it clearly, as with the true Jerusalem accent, he has gained a great deal of spiritual silver and gold. I have heard a Brother stutter over that word, “Free Grace,” till it came out very much like, “free will.” As for myself, that Shibboleth I pronounce without faltering, for my free will is that which I daily try to master and I bring it into complete subjection to the will of God—to Free Grace I owe everything! Blessed is that man, who, by his experience, has been made to know that Free Grace is the source of every blessing and privilege—and that salvation is all of Grace from first to last! By a knowledge of the great Gospel principle of Grace, men are brought forth, also, with silver and gold.

Such persons gain by their soul trouble a fund of healthy experience. They have been in prison and have had their feet made fast in the stocks. “Well,” says one, “I do not want to feel that sort of treatment.” No, but suppose you had felt it—the next time you met with a Brother who was locked up in the castle of the Giant Despair, you would know how to sympathize with him and help him. You who never felt a finger ache cannot show much sympathy with broken bones! I take it to be a great gain to a man to be able to exhibit sympathy towards sufferers of all kinds, especially towards spiritual suffers. If you can enter into the condition of a bondsman because you have, yourself, been a bondsman in Egypt and God has brought you out, then you will be qualified to comfort those who mourn.

Thus, you see, in various ways, the Lord’s people are enriched by the sorrows from which they are delivered by God. “HE brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.” Persons who come to Christ suddenly and find peace immediately, have much to be grateful for—and they may be helpful to others of a similar character. But those who suffer long law-work and have deep searching of the heart before they can enter into rest, have equal reasons for thankfulness, since they obtain a fitness for dealing with special cases of distressed consciences. Where this is the result of severe trial, we may well say that the Lord has brought them forth with silver and gold.

Thus do saints come out of persecution . The Church is refined by the fires of martyrdom. The heap on the Lord’s threshing floor is more largely made up of real wheat after the winnowing fan has been used upon it. Individual piety is also deeper, stronger and nobler in persecuting times than in other seasons. Eminent saints have usually been produced where the environment was opposed to the Truth of God and godliness. To this day the bride of Christ has for her fairest jewels the rubies of martyrdom. Out of each period of fierce persecution the Lord has brought forth His people the better for the fires. “HE brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.”

Thus do Believers come out of daily afflictions . They become wealthier in Grace and richer in experience. Have you noticed how real those men are who have known sharp trials? If you want an idle evening of chit-chat, go and talk to the gentleman with a regular income, constant good health and admiring friends—he will amuse your leisure hour. But if you are sad and sorrowful and need conversation that will bless you, steer clear of that man’s door! Look into the faces of the frivolous and turn away as a thirsty man from an empty cistern. He that has never had his own cheeks wet with tears cannot wipe my tears away! Where will you go in the day of trouble? Why, to that good old man whose sober experience has not robbed him of cheerfulness, though it has killed his sinful folly! He has been poor and he knows the inconvenience of straightened means. He has been ill and can bear with the infirmities of the sick. He has buried his dearest ones and has compassion for the bereaved. When he begins to talk, the tone of his voice is that of a sympathetic friend. His lips drop fatness of comfort. What a gain is his spiritual acquaintance!

A man of God, whose life has been full of mental exercises and spiritual conflict, as well as outward tribulation, becomes, through Divine Grace, a man of a large wealth of knowledge, prudence, faith, foresight, wisdom and he is, to the inexperienced, like some great proprietor by whom multitudes of the poorer classes are fed, guided, housed and set to work. Those who have been much tried are in the peerage of the Church! A man who has been in the furnace and has come out of it is a marked man. I think I should know Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, even now, if I were to meet them! Though the smell of the fire had not passed upon them, I feel sure that it left a glow upon their countenances and a glory upon their persons which we find no where else! They are, henceforth, called, “the three holy children”—they were holy before, but now men acknowledge it! Do you not think that they were great gainers by the furnace? And is it not true of all the godly whose lives have been made memorable by special tribulation—“HE brought them forth, also, with silver and gold”?

When you and I reach the shores of Heaven, thus shall we come into Glory. When we come forth out of our graves, it will not be with loss, but with enrichment. We shall leave corruption and the worm behind us and, with them, all that earthly grossness which made us groan in these mortal bodies! God will bring us forth, also, with silver and gold. What golden songs we will sing! What silver notes of gratitude will we pour forth! What jewels of communion with one another and of communion with our Lord will adorn our raiment! If we, too, have been men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, how much more fully shall we enter into the joy of our Lord because we entered into His sorrow! We also have suffered for sin and have done battle for God and for His Truth against the enemy. We, also, have borne reproach and become aliens to our mother’s children. We, too, have been bruised in the heel and yet, in death, have conquered death, even as He did—only by His Grace. Hence the joy of fellowship with Him through eternity! What news we shall have to tell to angels and principalities, and powers! The gems of our grateful history will be our trials and deliverances. Coming up from death to eternal life, this will be the sum of it, “HE brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.”

Dear Friends, I am anxious to pass on to the third point, for time is flying fast, but I cannot neglect the application of what I have said. I beg those of you who are sad and despondent to notice the Truths of God I have advanced. I want you to believe that your present affliction is for your enrichment! You will come out of this Egypt with much profit of Grace. “Let me out,” cries one, “only let me out!” I pray you, be not impatient. Why rush out naked, when a little patience will be repaid with silver and gold? If I were laboring in Egypt and I heard that it was time for me to start for the land of Canaan, I should be eager to be gone at once. But if I found that I must be hindered for an hour or two, I should certainly utilize the delay by disposing of my lands and endeavoring to get together treasures which I could carry with me! The delay would not be lost time. Therefore, beloved Friend, if you cannot at once obtain comfort, make good use of your affliction! Be always more earnest to profit by your trials than to escape from them! Be more earnest after the heavenly silver and gold than about hurrying away from the scene of conflict and temptation.

III. Thirdly, here is a very wonderful thing. OUR DELIVERANCE IS ACCOMPANIED WITH HEALTH AND STRENGTH—“There was not one feeble person among their tribes.” In the thousands of Israel there was not one person who could not march out of the land keeping rank as an efficient soldier! Everyone was fit for the journey through the wilderness. They numbered hard upon two millions, if not more, and it is a very surprising fact that there should not have been one feeble person among their tribes! Mark the word, not only no one sick, but no one, “feeble”—none with the rheumatism or other pains which enfeeble walking, or palsies which prevent bearing burdens! This was nothing less than a sanitary miracle, the like of which was never know in the natural order of things!

This fact is typical of the health and strength of the newly saved . The Lord’s people, at conversion, are, as a rule, wonderfully strong in their love to Jesus and their hatred of sin. In most cases our young converts, when they have truly come to Christ, even if they are a little timid, are vigorous, much in prayer, abounding in zeal and earnest in speaking out the Gospel! Many of them, I believe, would die at the stake readily enough, while they are in their first love. In their earliest days, nothing is too hot or too heavy for them, for the sake of Jesus Christ, their Lord! If I need a bit of work to be done which requires dash and self-sacrifice, give me a set of Israelites who have just come out of Egypt, for there is not one feeble person among their tribes!

After they have gone some distance into the wilderness, they are apt to forget the right hand of the Lord and to get to fretting and worrying. Very soon many of them are sick through being bitten by fiery serpents, or smitten with the plague. They begin grumbling and complaining and run into all sorts of mischief in a short time. But when they first came out, they were so excellent that even the Lord said, “I remember you, the love of your espousals.” I have known some of you, after you have been members of the Church for a few months, greatly need a nice cushion to sit upon and the cozy corner of the pew—whereas once you could stand in the aisle and not know that you were standing! You have grown wonderfully particular about the singing, the tunes and the length of the prayer— and the preacher’s attitude—and especially the respect paid to your own dear self! Only very choice service suits you—it would almost insult you if you were put to common work! You were not like that when you were first converted.

Do you remember how the crowd pressed upon you and yet you were so absorbed in listening to the preacher’s voice that you never minded it? What walks you took, then, to reach the service! I notice, my Friend, that when your grace grew short, the miles grew long. When you first joined the Church, I said to you, “I fear you live too far off to attend regularly.” But you took me up very quickly and said, “Oh, that is nothing, Sir! If I can only get spiritual food, distance is no object.” When you get cold in hearts, you find it inconvenient to come so far and you go to a fashionable place of worship where your musical tastes can be gratified. Yes, when Divine Grace declines, fancy rules the mind and love of ease controls the body—and the soul loses appetite and grows greedy for empty phrases— and weary of the Word of God. May the Lord grant you Grace to be among those of whom it is said, “There was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

Full often it is so with the persecuted . I do not wish that any of you should experience persecution, but I am persuaded it would do some of you good to have a touch of it. A man who has fulfilled an apprenticeship to this hard master is likely to be a man, indeed. If he has endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, he will be fit to become an officer in the army and an instructor of recruits! If I could, by the lifting of my finger, screen every Believer from persecution at home and in the workshop, I would long hesitate before I did it, since I am persuaded that the Church is never more pure, more holy, more prayerful, or more powerful than when the world is raging against her! The dogs keep the wolves out! The hypocrite declines to enter the Church where he will gain nothing by reproach, or worse. When there were stakes at Smithfield, Protestantism meant heroism! When the Lord’s covenanting people were meeting among the hills and mosses of Scotland, there were no “moderates” or “modernthought” men among them! They knew and loved the Truth of God for which they fought and that Truth of God made them strong!

It could be a glorious day if it were so with all God’s people , that there were none feeble. We should, as a Church, labor to reach this high standard. We would have the weakest to be as David and David as the Angel of the Lord! We would have our babes become young men and our young men, fathers in Christ! Do we reach this standard at the Tabernacle? Alas, we do not by a very long way! There are numbers of very feeble persons among our tribes. I will not say a word against them, dear Hearts! For I trust they are sincere, though feeble. How greatly I wish that they were more concerned about their own feebleness, for it is a real loss to the cause we have at heart! The feeble hinder the strong. We need all the strength of the host for storming the enemies’ ramparts, whereas some of us have to stay behind and nurse the infirm. We should not mind this so much, only these are the same poor creatures that were nursed 20 years ago—and they have not made any advance! May the Lord strengthen us all till we shall all be made fit for the service of Jesus!

Oh, when we meet in the Home Country, when we once get to Glory, what a delight it will be that there will be no sin or weakness there! When the Lord has once brought us forth from the world and all its troubles, then all sinful weakness shall be unknown! We shall all be raised in power and shall be as angels of God! Are you going there, dear Friends? “Yes,” says one, “I hope that I am going there, but I am a feeble person.” Thank God that you are on the right road, even if you limp! It is better to enter into life crippled, maimed and feeble, than to run and leap in the way of death! If I can give a lift to anyone who is feeble, I am sure I will. At the same time, I would urge you to cry to the Lord to make you strong—and bid you trust in Christ for the power which He, alone, can give, of faith to overcome doubts and fears.

If any of you have not believed unto eternal life, put your trust in the Lord Jesus now. They serve a good Master who trust only in Jesus and take up their cross and follow Him. In Him is life for the perishing, joy for the sorrowing, rest for the weary and liberty for the captives! Are you shut up, like a prisoner in a castle? Do but trust in Jesus and He will batter the dungeon door and bring you out! Yes, and He will not give you a penniless liberty, a liberty to perish of need! No, it shall be said of you, and of others like you, “HE brought them forth, also, with silver and gold.” Amen, so be it! So be it, even at this moment, good Lord!

**Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—Psalm 105.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 116, 126.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2599 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A VISIT FROM THE LORD  
NO. 2599

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 4, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT CHRIST CHURCH, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, (during the renovation of the Tabernacle),

**ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 30, 1883.**

**“O visit me with Your salvation.”  
Psalm 106:4.**

THIS is the prayer of a man who understood the art of praise. He begins this Psalm with a Hallelujah. “Praise you the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.” Now, mark, there is no prayer that is purer, more spiritual, more heavenly than the prayer which comes out of a heart full of praise! How often have I said that prayer is the breathing in of the air of Heaven and praise is the breathing of it out again? Prayer and praise make up the best life of the Christian and he is not yet thoroughly in spiritual health who is all for prayer and not at all for praise— but he is the really healthy Christian who has these two things rightly balanced. Such a man one moment cries, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.” And then, directly afterwards, prays, “Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You bear unto Your people.” Is it not possible, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you have lost some of your power in prayer because you have somewhat neglected praise? If we do not bless God for the mercies we have received, how can we go and ask Him for more? If we have already been heard in our prayers and yet have failed to acknowledge our obligation to the Giver, do we not come to prayer with a very bad attitude? Might not God say to us, “You did not thank Me the last time I granted your request. Why should I answer you this time?” Let us, therefore, each one, take care that our prayer is the petition of one who can and who does praise the Lord.

Next, observe that this prayer was offered by one who knew the blessedness of the saints. In the third verse he says, “Blessed are they that keep justice and he that does righteousness at all times.” I introduce this remark because, to a large extent, the prayer of the text is the prayer of a sinner—the prayer of one who felt that he did not bear the character of a saint as fully as he ought to have done. And, Beloved, if we were more saintly, we would have much more power in prayer and we should be much more happy. If we walked with God more closely, and kept justice, and did righteousness at all times, we would be saved from many of those trials and afflictions and disappointments which now fall to our lot. The Psalmist tells us about what troubles the children of Israel had in the wilderness, but those troubles resulted from their sin. They need not have had to endure half what they suffered if they had only been right with God. And so, in the later days of their history, they would never have been captives to their enemies if they had not first been captives to their sins. If they had walked as God would have had them walk, their peace would have been like a river—one of them would have chased a thousand—and two would have put ten thousand to flight! There will be, practically, hardly any limit to the blessedness which a child of God may enjoy even in this life if he will but walk carefully with his God.

So, dear Friends, if you and I feel that we have wandered and if our prayer has to be presented “out of the depths,” yet I trust that we have not forgotten that there is a peace, a rest, a joy which God bestows upon those who walk uprightly, those who live more carefully than we have done and keep nearer to Him than some of His erring children do.

Now, coming to the text, I want you to notice the prayer itself. I have nothing new to say, but I shall try to utter some very simple Truths of God suggested by the Psalmist’s prayer, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

I. The first thought is, that the Psalmist here prays for SALVATION. What a wonderful word that word, “salvation,” is! Well might Dr. Watts say— *“Salvation! Let the echo fly*

*The spacious earth around,”*  
for there is something in it to be heard by all who dwell on this spacious earth. Salvation is the one thing which all men need, and when it is given to them, it conveys to them innumerable mercies for time and for eternity. Indeed, everything good is wrapped up in that word, salvation. As we read this Psalm, you probably noticed how the Psalmist sings concerning salvation in it. He says, first, that God saved the people out of Egypt. There they were, a nation of captives and bond slaves—and He began to work with a high hand and an outstretched arm to bring them out of their captivity! And though they did not understand His wonders, yet, nevertheless, He saved them. That is a salvation in which you and I also delight—salvation by the sprinkled blood—salvation by the Paschal Lamb—salvation by the right hand of God and His out-stretched arm—a salvation which reveals His faithfulness, His mercy and His power. Let us bless God if we experimentally know what this salvation means! And if we do not, let this be the prayer of each one of us, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

One of the worst results of the Fall is that men who are spiritually dead do not pray for life. But if there is one here who is sufficiently under the influence of the Holy Spirit to know that he needs spiritual life, he may begin at once to pray, “O visit me with Your salvation.” If you have not yet felt the burden of sin. If you do not yet savingly know the SinBearer. If you are still a bond slave to your sin, you have, indeed, need to pray this prayer. If you know that you are not what you ought to be and that, living and dying as you now are, you will perish everlastingly, then with all your heart and with as much desire as there may be in you, do breathe the prayer to God, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

O poor Heart, as soon as you begin to pray, you begin to live! You may have very little power in prayer. In fact, your prayer may be no better than the first feeble cry of a newborn child, but it is a sign of life and the Lord hears even a groan! And the tears that fall without a sound are liquid music to Jehovah, for He knows what they mean. May I not hope that somebody here, if he cannot pray spiritually, will yet pray as do the young ravens who, in their nests, when they are hungry, cry, and the Lord hears them and relieves their hunger? If you think that your prayer is no better than the cry of a poor bird, or the roaring of a wild beast, yet still cry, still pray! One trick of the devil is to try to stop you from praying—he will tell you that you will not be heard. But I can assure you that the cry of misery, the sob of inward grief is certain to be heard by the tender and gracious God whom we worship. Somewhere in this building, I think, there must be some heart that has been, up to now, giddy, thoughtless, careless—that will now begin to pray—“O visit me with Your salvation.”

Further on in the Psalm, the writer sings of a second salvation when the people were delivered at the Red Sea. Its waves rolled before them and they could not tell how they were to escape from Pharaoh who was close behind with all the chariots and horsemen of Egypt pursuing them. Ah, poor timid Israelites! They could almost hear the whips of their taskmasters and they probably feared that something worse would come upon them and that they would feel their oppressors’ swords and that their blood would soon be shed! They were in a state of great anxiety and trouble, yet we read just now, “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake. He rebuked the Red Sea, also, and it was dried up—and He saved them from the hand of him that hated them and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.”

Perhaps I am addressing some who are so fully conscious of their sin that they are driven almost to despair by it. Instead of believing that this awakened conscience of theirs is an evidence of God’s Grace, they are afraid that it is a sign of condemnation. The weight of their sin crushes them—they hardly dare hope that there may be a way of escape for them, but, poor Soul, if this is your sad state, I trust that you will be able to pray, “‘O visit me with Your salvation.’ O God, the Red Sea rolls in front of me, the rocks frown upon me on either hand and my sins pursue me, and seek to slay me. ‘O visit me with Your salvation.’ Come, and dry up this Red Sea of iniquity! Come and destroy these adversaries of mine and let me sing with the Psalmist, ‘And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.’ ‘O visit me with Your salvation.’”

You know how it was with Israel—I always delight to dwell upon it— how the Lord brought again the waters of the Red Sea and Pharaoh and all his hosts were swallowed up. And then Miriam took her timbrel and all the women went forth after her and sang unto the Lord who had triumphed gloriously, and thrown the horses and their riders into the sea! And this was one of the most jubilant notes of their song, “The depths have covered them; there is not one of them left.” So it was, Beloved, when you and I, having cried to God for mercy, at last found it through Jesus Christ our Savior! Then we saw our sins cast into the depths of the sea and we were ready to dance for joy as we said, “The depths have covered them! There is not one of them left.” Our experience ought to be an encouragement to others. Come, despairing Soul, you that are like a mouse in a hole and hardly dare to pop your head out to look! Never mind about coming out! Stay where you are and there breathe the prayer, “O visit me with Your salvation,” and you shall yet come out into light and liberty, and you shall joy and rejoice in God!

It may be that you and I, dear Friends, have gone further on than this. We have been saved from our natural ruin and saved from the power of despair worked in us by conviction—and now we are fighting with our uprising corruptions. Our inbred sin is like the deep that lies under and, perhaps, lately, the fountains of the great deep have been broken up within us. We cannot sin without being grieved and troubled by it. It is a vexation even to hear the report of it. Oh, that we could live without sinning at all! Well, now, Beloved, if you are struggling against it, let this be your prayer to the Most High, “O visit me with Your salvation.” The Lord is able at once to come into your heart and to put an end to your temptation whatever it may be. Is it unbelief? He can strengthen your faith. Is it covetousness? He can deliver you from that abomination and give you a contented spirit. Is it anger? Oh, how sweetly can He come and fill you with love! Whatever may be the evil against which you are fighting, He can help you overthrow it and you shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved you! I earnestly commend this prayer to every struggling Believer, to everyone who feels the two natures within him striving for the mastery and who is, sometimes, in doubt whether the house of David or the house of Saul will get the victory! Doubt not, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord is with the true seed. He that quickened you will keep the new life in you—it cannot die, for it is born of God and you shall yet overcome sin and death and Hell! Only forget not to breathe the cry from your very soul, “O visit me with Your salvation,” and you shall prove what a salvation it is to be saved from the power of sin.

Our text may also be used in another sense, for salvation means deliverance from grievous affliction, just as, in this Psalm, when the children of Israel were brought into great distress by their enemies, God came and saved them from their foes. So, at this time, dear Friend, you may be in great distress. It may be temporal distress, or mental distress, or spiritual distress. Whether you are suffering in body, or in mind, or in heart, God knows how to deliver you. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” “He that is our God is the God of salvation and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” If you should ever get so low in spirit that you can only compare yourself with Jonah when the whale went down to the very bottom of the sea and he felt that the earth with her bars was about him forever and he was at the very foundations of the everlasting hills—yet even then the God who brought up Jonah from the depths can bring you up! See how the wheel turns—that spoke which was lowest just now has become the highest! Mark how the stars which shall, tonight, descend, and shall not be seen all day long, shall yet, when night comes round again, climb once more to their zenith and occupy their appointed places! You are not doomed to be down forever! You shall yet mount up again and you may say to the adversary, “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy! When I fall, I shall arise.” “The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea.”

To every tried and troubled one, then, I suggest the prayer of our text, “O visit me with Your salvation,” for it points out the way of deliverance for them, whatever their trouble may be, and it specially concerns the allimportant matter of salvation!

II. Now let us think for a few minutes upon the second thing which is very manifest in the text, and that is, VISITATION—“O visit me with Your salvation.”

You have read in the newspapers of men having “died in the visitation of God.” Sometimes, that has been the verdict of the jury at the close of an inquest. But here is a man who lived by the visitation of God! And, truly, it is a most blessed thing to know that the very best and truest way of living is to live by being visited by God—visited by His salvation! I admire the wording of this prayer. It does not say, “O save me.” That would be a very proper petition. It does not say, “O send me salvation.” That, under some aspects, would be proper enough. But the petition is, “Lord, come Yourself and bring the salvation that I need, by Yourself coming to me. ‘O visit me with Your salvation.’” What a blessed prayer this is! “O visit me! Lord, visit me!” It takes some faith to pray it, for humility prompts us to say, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof.” Yet faith, and a childlike spirit teach us to pray, “Lord, visit me. I hear that You visit Your people. Lord, visit me. I have heard one of them say that you came under his roof and stayed with him all through the night and make him unspeakably glad. ‘Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You bear unto Your people: O visit me’—yes, even me—‘with Your salvation.’ Though the Heaven of heavens cannot contain You, for You are so great, yet I know that You dwell in every humble and contrite heart. Lord, come and visit me, and dwell within me.” I think this is indeed a blessed prayer.

Mark the condescension which the Psalmist feels that the Lord will thus manifest. “‘O visit me with Your salvation.’ Lord, I cannot be saved unless You will visit me. Visit me not as a saved one, but, ‘visit me with Your salvation.’ I am lost until You come to me. O come, Lord, and visit me as a Savior! Come and visit me as a Physician, for I am sick! Pay me a visit of mercy, a visit of Grace and tenderness. O You great and glorious Lord, I beseech You, come and visit me! By the remembrance of Bethlehem’s manger, the horned oxen, the straw and the stable, so ill fitted for Your reception, come and visit me! And, as the angels sang when You thus descended to the lowliest of lowliness, so shall my heart sing yet more sweetly if You will visit me—even me! It will be great condescension on Your part, but, ‘O visit me with Your salvation.’”

And it will be compassion, too. “‘O visit me.’ I am a prisoner, yet come, Lord, and visit me. I am lame and very weak. Lord, I have not a leg to carry me to Your House, so, come to my house, Lord. ‘O visit me!’ My heart is heavy and sorely burdened. My very wishes lag, my prayers limp, my desires halt. O come and visit me! If I cannot come to You, yet come You to me, my God.” It seems to me that this is a sweet, sweet prayer for one who is under a sense of inability and whose strength is utterly gone. “O visit me with Your salvation.” In it I see condescension and compassion.

But there is more in it even than that, there is also communion—“O visit me with Your salvation.” This means more than a complimentary call such as ladies and gentlemen make when they spend half a day in going around to their friends distributing little bits of cardboard. I believe it is a wonderful token of friendship to do that, but you and I do not move in that artificial region. When we visit anyone, we mean it, and we do not make calls of mere ceremony or custom, but a visit from a beloved friend—oh, what a joy it is! Occasionally I have the opportunity of meeting dear friends who have been asking me to pay them a visit and I can see, by the very way that they receive me, that they are almost as happy as the black men were when Mungo Park went to them! They said that they began to date their existence from the day when the white man came that way. Most of you must have some friends who love you so much that when they see you at their house, they do not need to know when you are going, but, if they could, they would make you always stay there. Dr. Watts went to see Sir Thomas Abney, at Abney Park, to spend a week—but that week lasted through all the rest of his life, for he never went away from there—and he lies buried in Abney Park. And Sir Thomas is buried there, also, so that even in death, the friends are not separated from one another! They never meant to part after they once came together. That is the kind of visit we need from the Lord, so let us breathe this prayer now, “O Lord, come and visit me, but do not merely pay me a brief visit, but come to stay with me.”

“That is a bold request,” says one, “to ask God to come and abide with us.” Listen, listen, listen! There was a certain Church—you know the name of it—Laodicea, of which Christ said that it made Him sick. But what did He say next? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That passage is not a call from Christ to sinners, as it is often used—it may, perhaps, be so used by way of illustration. But that is not its first meaning. It is this. Here are some people of God who have fallen so low in Grace that they are neither cold nor hot and Christ prescribes this remedy for their lukewarmness—that He should come and sup with them—that He should come and pay them a visit. Now, if our blessed Lord was willing to visit the Laodiceans who were neither cold nor hot, I am sure that He will come to us who are cold! And He will come to us who are hot—He would rather come to such than to the lukewarm! Let us, then, each one, breathe the prayer, “Come, Lord, and tarry not. Come now and visit me with Your salvation.” And when He does come, Brothers and Sisters, let us do as Sir Thomas Abney did with Dr. Watts—let us get Him to protract His visit! He will act as though He would go further, as He did when at Emmaus, but our wisdom will be to say, as the two disciples did, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And when He says, “No, I must go,” we must not take His, “No,” for an answer, but we must do as they did—“They constrained Him.” He will go, if you let Him, but you must not let Him! Perhaps He will say, “Let Me go, for the day breaks,” but you must follow Jacob’s example and say, “I will not let You go,” and you need not add, “except You bless me,” but you may say, “I will not let you go at all! I mean to hold to You on and on and on, by day and night—You shall not leave me.” You will be blessed, indeed, if you can pray the prayer of our text in this sense, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

III. Now, with great brevity, I turn to a third thing in my text and that is, PERSONALITY—“O visit me with Your salvation.” We ought to pray for one another. We must pray for the peace and prosperity of the whole Church of Christ, but there are times when it will be well that all our desire should run in this direction and that we should cry to the Lord, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

This petition of the Psalmist shows great necessity. It is as if he had said, “Lord, I need You more than any others do, therefore, visit me. Unless you come to me, I shall be a wretch undone forever. ‘O visit me with Your salvation.’” It is always unwise to make your necessity appear little. It is so great that you never can exaggerate it—take care that you do not set it in a diminished form! When you come before God, do not try to make yourself out to be a little sinner. You are not likely to make yourself appear more guilty than you are, but your highest wisdom is to state your case to the Lord in all its blackness and its badness—and then to cry to Him, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

It seems to me that this personality of the prayer also betokens great unworthiness, as if the Psalmist felt that the Lord might go and visit others and, perhaps, find some reason for so doing, but, as for him, he must cry, and cry mightily, too, or else he would be passed by, for he felt himself so unworthy. “O Lord, visit me; visit me to save me! If ever a soul needed saving, I am that one. If ever there was a sinner near despair, I am that sinner! Lord, come and visit me with Your salvation!”

The prayer also reveals great concentration of desire. “O visit me with Your salvation.” It seems to me as if the Psalmist put all his thoughts, all his desires, yes, and his very life into that prayer. Let us imitate him in this earnestness and concentration. Where are you, my dear Friend? — for I feel certain that there is somebody present who can pray this prayer. “O visit me.” If you are growing old, well may you say, “O visit me.” If you are feeling ill—if the doctor tells you that there is something amiss with that heart of yours—you may well pray, “O visit me.” Or do you feel yourself very weak and feeble in spirit? Well, then, do not hesitate to make your prayer, tonight, a personal one—there is nothing selfish in crying with the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” If anybody says that it is selfish to pray for yourself so much, just ask him what he would do if he were drowning? Does anybody say that it is selfish for him to strike out and try to swim, or selfish to seize the lifebuoy that is thrown to him? If you were in a fire and likely to be burned to death, would anybody call you selfish because you looked for the fire escape and climbed on it as soon as it touched your window?

And when your very soul is in danger, it is a hallowed selfishness to seek, first, its salvation! If your own soul is lost, what can you do for the salvation of other people? If you perish, what benefit can you be to your fellow men? Truly, this is a holy charity which ought to begin at home and I do not believe that any man really cares for the souls of others who does not first and foremost care about his own soul! If you do not pray, “O visit me with Your salvation,” I am sure that you do not pray, “O visit my wife with Your salvation. O visit my children with Your salvation.” Therefore, keep to this personal prayer till it is answered! And when it is, then pray for all others as earnestly as you have prayed for yourself!

IV. And now to finish. Notice one thing more in this text and that is, A SPECIALTY—“O visit me with Your salvation”—the kind of salvation he has been describing in this Psalm—the salvation worked by Omnipotent Grace, the salvation of enduring love!

Dear Friends, I have heard of a good many so-called salvations in my time. I heard, some time ago, of a woman who said that she had been saved already six times and it had not done her much good. She had been to different revival meetings and joined various societies that make a great row—and call it salvation—and in that way she had been “saved” six times and she did not know that she was any better. No, and you may be “saved” in such a fashion as that six thousand times and be none the better, for that is not God’s salvation!

The Psalmist prayed, “O visit me with Your salvation,” and by that he meant real salvation, a radical change, a thorough work of Grace. God’s salvation includes a perfect cleansing in the precious blood of Jesus, a supernatural work in renewing the heart, a resurrection work in raising the dead and giving a new life. So, when you pray, “O visit me with Your salvation,” you ask the Lord to give you real salvation, not a sham.

This salvation is also compete salvation. It saves the man from the love of sin. It not merely saves him from getting drunk, from lying, from thieving and from uncleanness, but it saves him within as well as without. It is a thorough renewal—a work of Grace that takes effect upon every part of his nature. God grant that you and I may never be content with a salvation which is not the work of Divine Grace! You remember that it is said of Mr. Rowland Hill that he was met, somewhere about the New Cut, by a drunk who reeled up to him and said, “Well, Mr. Hill, I am glad to see you, Sir. I am one of your converts.” “Yes,” replied the good minister, “you may be one of my converts. If you had been one of the Lord’s converts, you would not be drunk.” There are too many of our converts about—we may find them everywhere except in Heaven! But woe unto the man who is content with being the convert of his fellow man! What we need is a visitation from God, Himself, and therefore, we pray with the Psalmist, “O visit me with Your salvation.”

Lastly, and chiefly, God’s salvation is eternal salvation. We hear, in various quarters, from time to time, about a salvation that is only temporary. I have been told, again and again, of men who are said to have been children of God one day, and children of the devil the next. Now, I believe that a temporary salvation is a trumpery salvation and that it is neither worth preaching nor receiving. But God’s salvation is both worth preaching and receiving because it is everlasting salvation. A good old divine was once asked whether he believed in the final perseverance of the saints. “Well,” said he, “I do not know much about that matter, but I firmly believe in the final perseverance of God, that where He has begun a good work He will carry it on until it is complete.” To my mind, that Truth of God includes the final perseverance of the saints—they persevere in the way of salvation because God keeps them in it. Does the Holy Spirit renew the heart of a man and then is His work, after all, undone, so that the man goes back to his unregenerate state? What is to become of him then?

“Oh!” says someone, “he may be born again.” What? A man to be born again, and again, and again? Is there anything in the Bible to warrant such teaching as that? I believe not! If the Holy Spirit’s work in renewing the heart could ever be undone, then this text would come in, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance”—for God’s greatest work has been already worked upon them and if it could fail, nothing more could be done for them. “But, Beloved,” says the Apostle, after making this solemn declaration, “we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” So, dear Friends, if the Lord saves you, you are saved forever! If He has worked within you a work of Grace, it will assuredly end in Glory—

*“All necessary Grace will God bestow,  
And crown that Grace with Glory, too!  
He gives us all things and withholds  
No real good from upright souls.”*

“Lord, visit me with Your salvation.” Others may have their own salvation of any sort or kind that they please, but do visit me with Your salvation! Take my case in Your hands, then the work will be done, well done, and done forever.” Pray thus, dear Friend, for yourself. “O visit me with Your salvation,” and He will do so. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” God lead you all to accept His great salvation even now, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 106.**

This Psalm relates the story of God’s mercy to Israel, of the people’s provocation of Jehovah, and of His great patience with them, It commences with an exhortation to praise the Lord.

Verse 1. Praise you Jehovah. Or, “Hallelujah.” I cannot help remarking, here, that this is one of the most sacred words in the whole Bible and it ought always to be pronounced with the utmost reverence. I sometimes feel my blood chill when I hear of “hallelujah lasses” and, “hallelujah bonnets.” If those who use such expressions rightly understood the meaning of the word, they would not thus take the name of the Lord in vain!

1 *.*O give thanks unto Jehovah; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever. As long as you and I are sinners, this will be one of the sweetest notes in our song of thanksgiving unto Jehovah—“His mercy endures forever.”

2 *.*Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can show forth all His praise? Neither the angels nor the perfect spirits who day without night circle His throne rejoicing can show forth all Jehovah’s praise.

3 *.*Blessed are they that keep justice, and he that does righteousness at all times. There is great comfort in walking near to God. The way of peace, the way of blessing is the way of righteousness, but, alas, my Brothers and Sisters, we do not always keep in that way as we should. The Psalmist himself felt that he did not, therefore he prayed—

4 *.*Remember me, O LORD, with the favor that You bear unto Your people: O visit me with Your salvation. He felt that he needed God’s Grace in all its saving power.

5 *.*That I may see the good of Your chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance. He longs to get in among the people of God. He wants to share the favor which God bestows upon them—the Free Grace which He manifests to them. He wants to be included in their election, to rejoice in their gladness and to glory in their inheritance.

6 **,**7*.*We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have dose wickedly. Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt. Very great wonders were worked there when God’s time came to set His people free from their cruel bondage. There was a marvelous display of power on God’s part, yet the Psalmist had to say, “Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt.”

7 *.*They remembered not the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. They had hardly started out of Egypt before they provoked Jehovah. They had only just caught sight of the rolling waters of the Red Sea when they began to murmur against God and against His servant, Moses.

8 *.*Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake. Oh, is not that a grand word? Well might Jehovah say, “Not for Your sakes do I this, O house of Israel.” He saved them for His own sake.

8 *.*That He might make His mighty power to be known. Free Grace finds in itself, not in us, its own motive, and discovers its own reason for acting on our behalf. God’s reason for mercy is found in His mercy.

9-13. He rebuked the Red Sea, also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel. Ah, me! Even the divided sea is soon forgotten! Enemies walled up by water speedily pass from remembrance. “They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel.”

14, 15. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul. I do not know of anything more dreadful than that—to be fattened outside and to be starved within—to have everything that heart could wish for and yet not to have the best thing that the heart ought to wish for! May God save us from that appearance of prosperity which is only a veiled desolation!

16. They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD. These two men had done everything for the children of Israel. They had been the instruments in the hand of God of innumerable blessings to them, yet they envied Moses and Aaron.

17, 18. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked. Jehovah’s mercy did not melt the people’s hard hearts, so perhaps the fear of His judgment would. God tried both methods with them, as He has done with us, for sometimes He has been very gracious to us and at other times He has chastened us very sorely. He has tried the kiss and He has tried the blow. Yet what happened in the case of Israel?

19-22. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham and terrible things by the Red Sea. What was to become of such a people, provoking Him again and again?

23. Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen, stood before Him in the breach to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them. How often has our blessed Mediator, who is far greater than Moses, stood before the Lord in the breach! How often has the great Husbandman said, concerning the fruitless tree, “Cut it down; why cumbers it the ground?” And then that Divine Dresser of the vineyard has pleaded, “Let it alone this year, also, till I shall dig about it.” And here we are, still spared and still blessed through the intercession of God’s chosen Mediator.

24. Yes, they despised the pleasant land. They said that the Canaan towards which they were traveling was not worth the trouble of getting to it—“They despised the pleasant land.”

24-28. They believed not His Word: but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD. Therefore He lifted up His hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: to overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands. They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. They began to study necromancy and spiritualism and to join in the abominations of the worship of Baal.

29. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their inventions: and the plague broke in upon them. Now notice how something always happened to spare them from the destruction which they deserved.

30, 31. Then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations forevermore. Yet they still went on sinning against the Most High.

32, 33. They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Does it not seem remarkable that Moses, the true servant of God, was not spared from punishment when it was but a word that He spoke unadvisedly, yet still the mercy of God was continued to that provoking generation? Ah, that is always the way with our jealous God—those whom He loves best will be sure to feel His chastising rod, whatever happens to others. At last the Israelites reached Canaan—they entered into the land that flowed with milk and honey! Did that change their character? No, not in the least.

34-38. They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yes, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Just think how low they had sunk! God’s own people had come down to this—that they actually offered their own children in sacrifice to Moloch!

39-43. Thus were they defiled with their own works and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times did He deliver them. You would not have expected to find such a sentence as that, here, yet there it stands! Notwithstanding all that these people did, “many times did He deliver them.”

43-45. But they provoked Him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry: and He remembered His Covenant with them and repented according to the multitude of His mercies. Was there ever so strange a story as this—a story of provocation continued almost beyond belief, and yet of mercy which would not be overcome—of persevering love that would not turn aside?

46-48. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Your holy name, and to triumph in Your praise. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise you the LORD. So the Psalm ends uponits keynote—“Hallelujah”—“Praise You Jehovah.”

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FINE PLEADING  
NO. 3539

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 24, 1871.

**“Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You have toward Your people; O visit me with Your salvation.”  
Psalm 106:4.**

How gracious a thing it is on God’s part to make prayers for us! He puts them into our mouths. No one need say, “I cannot pray because I am unable to compose a sentence.” Here is a prayer already composed which would be suitable for the lips of anyone here present—high or low, rich or poor, saint or sinner! And it is a yet greater mercy that the God who thus gives us the form of prayer waits to give us the spirit of prayer, “for the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities.” Whereas we know not what we should pray for, as we ought, He “makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” When He gives you the prayer, and gives you the power to pray it, what a sweet blessing! But that is not all, for when the prayer is thus presented on earth aright, there waits One above, quick of ear and ready of plea, who takes the supplication, presents it before His Father’s Throne, perfected by His wisdom and perfumed by His merit—and then the Father smiles and the prayer is answered with abundant blessings!

My prayer tonight is that many here present may take the words of our text and have them laid upon their souls like burning coals—and that then the smoking incense of holy prayer may go up to Heaven—and the Lord may smell in it, through Jesus Christ, a sweet savor of rest!

We shall regard our text tonight in three lights—first, as a suitable prayer for every Christian. Secondly, as a very fitting petition for distressed souls—I mean Christians who are desponding and have lost their evidences. And, thirdly, as a very suitable cry for an awakened, seeking sinner. My dear Brothers and Sisters in the faith, will you join me, then, under the first head, while we consider—

I. HOW SUITABLE THIS PRAYER IS FOR EACH OF US WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.  
You will observe that he who prays here asks for no exceptional favor. He says, “Remember me with the favor that You have toward Your people.” It is not an ambitious prayer that asks to be distinguished beyond the rest of the beloved family. It is not a discontented prayer that seeks to have some special blessing which shall be denied to the rest of the Christian brotherhood. It is a prayer for benedictions common to all the saints! “Remember me with the favor which You have toward Your people.” And this is a lesson for us in our prayers. For instance, nature suggests to me that I should pray to be saved of all bodily pain—but that is not a favor which God bears towards His people. Many of His people here endure even excruciating pain—some in the pangs of martyrdom— and others through His laying His hand upon them in natural sickness. He never intended to keep His people from pain. He had a Son without sin, but He never had a Son without suffering! The Perfect One, the FirstBorn, must have hands and feet pierced and every nerve must become the means of fresh agony to Him. I dare not, therefore, pray, “Lord, keep me from all physical pain.” Why should I ask to have what He has not given to the rest of His people? No, if there is a cup on the table that tastes of the bitter, and He means it for the sons, let me have my share— and His love with it! So, too, I have no right to ask God to preserve me in riches, or in a comfortable position, or to keep me from poverty. I may ask this, but it must always be with complete submission to the Divine Will, for who am I that I should not be poor? Better ones by far than I have been poor—much poorer than I am likely to be. Why am I to expect to go to Heaven by a smooth, grassy road, while others have had to tread the flints that cut their feet?—

*“Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?”*  
To desire to escape from every form of trial is natural to us, but it is not a dictate of Grace that we should turn it into prayer. No, be content with the common lot of God’s people. “Shall the disciple be above his Master? Shall the servant be above his Lord?” Let this content you, “Father, whether healthy or sick, whether rich or poor, whether honored or despised, extend to me the favor which You have toward Your people—and my greatest desires can ask no more.”  
But please observe, next, that while this prayer asks for nothing more than the common blessing, it also is content with nothing less— *“Extend to me that favor, Lord,  
You to Your people do afford.”*  
It is the same favor that is extended to them that is asked for, for, Brothers and Sisters, anything short of this will not answer our turn. I would desire, and I know you do, my Brethren, to have that favor from God which is eternal—that favor which has no beginning—that everlasting favor which was in the Divine Mind before the earth was. You want to also have immutable favor, the favor that never changes. Though we change, yet it abides the same. What would you do if the favor of God were changeable? Of what use would His love be, if that love could come and go— could sometimes give, and then again could take away? You need immutable favor! And I know you need boundless favor, for your needs are unlimited. You need the love of Christ that passes knowledge—you need it in all its heights and all its depths—you need the very heart of God! You need His heart of compassion. You need a Savior to be one with you, and yourself to be one with Him. You would not like to be put off with a crown. You would not like to be put off with an empire, or with all that earth calls good and great! You need no more, but you need no less than such favor as the Lord extends towards those whom He loves, who are the objects of His sacred choice. No more. No less.  
You must note, next, in the prayer what is peculiarly to be observed— that he who is praying in this case asks for blessings on the same footing as the rest of the saints. You will observe that it is on the footing of Grace he asks that he may have the favor which God bears towards His people. “Favor.” If there is one saved who has been a great offender against God’s Law—immoral, debauched, and depraved—it must be by favor. And, dear Christian Friend, whoever you may be, there is no other way in which you can be saved and you know it! When the Lord extends the blessings of the Covenant to gross sinners, it is clear that they are given to them simply because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy! But to you, also, the favor comes in precisely the same way. I am sure you dare not ask God to deal with you on the ground of merit, for what are your merits, O you saints—what are your merits, but to merit the eternal flames? You ask the Lord that He would extend to you, not the dealings of His Justice, but that He would remember you with the compassions of His Grace! Is there any professed Christian here that refuses to stand on such terms as these, and come to God and ask for favor—for gratuitous mercy? Then, Friend, you are no child of God! Whatever else the children differ in, they never disagree in this—that “salvation is of the Lord,” and is of Grace, and of Grace alone! Your spot is not “the spot of His children,” unless you look at even the bread you eat and the raiment you wear as the gift of Divine Charity and unless you place all your hope for pardon of sin and for acceptance at the last, entirely upon the free, undeserved, spontaneous favor of the Lord your God!  
Well then, you see what we ask for is what He gives to all His people— no more, no less! And we ask for that, not as our due, but as a favor—a favor for which we will bless Him in life and bless Him in death, if He will but remember to grant it to us! Still looking at our text as the Christian’s prayer, I would observe that he wishes, according to the text, that the same results may follow as in the case of all God’s people, for he adds, “Visit me with Your salvation.” Beloved, God’s favor ends in salvation! And that word, “salvation,” is a very extensive term. If you read the Psalm you will see that the Psalmist evidently uses it, first, in the sense of deliverance. The children of Israel came to the Red Sea and they were afraid that there they would be destroyed. But God led them through the deeps as through the wilderness! Well then, when I pray this prayer, “O Lord, remember me with the favor that You bear Your people,” I mean this— “When I come into any trouble, I ask You to help me to go through it. As You made a way through the Red Sea for Your people of old, make a way for me.” Oh, how often does God do this for us! When it seems as if the obstacles were almost insurmountable—when our wit seems to have failed us and we can do no more—we have been ready to say, “Alas, Master, what shall we do?” Then our extremity has been the Divine Opportunity and through the depths of the sea He has led His rejoicing people! Then the word, salvation, is meant in the Psalm evidently to include the forgiveness of sins, for you remember, as we read the Psalm, how the sins of Israel were mentioned over and over again. But it is added, “Nevertheless, when they cried unto Him, He heard their prayers.” So if I use this prayer, I am to mean just this, “Lord, You are accustomed to forgive Your people. Forgive me! You blot out their sins like a cloud. Blot out mine! You, moreover, help Your children to overcome their sins. Help me! Sanctify me, spirit, soul and body! You preserve Your people in temptation and bring them out of it. Gracious Shepherd, keep me as one of Your flock! You save your children in the hour of great peril, and as their day, so is their strength. Oh, Infinite Preserver of Your beloved, cover me with Your feathers and under Your wings permit me to trust You! Let Your Truth be my shield and buckler!” I think it is a very, very sweet prayer. “Visit me with Your salvation when I am on my bed, tossing to and fro, and raise me up if it is Your will. Visit me when I am slandered, and my name is cast out as evil, and cheer Your servant’s heart. Visit me when I am in the deep waters and the depths overflow me—when I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. Come and prove Your saving might. Visit me when I come to die. When the chill floods of the last river are about me, visit me with Your salvation! Then deal with me as You have dealt with Your saints whenever they have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. May Your rod and Your staff comfort me. Visit me with Your salvation.” I suggest, Christian Brothers and Sisters, that this prayer will do for you living, and will do for you dying! It is a suitable prayer for the morning and for the evening, for the young and for the old, for days of joy and days of distress. Blessed prayer, let it be often on your lips!  
Only one more remark we will make upon it in reference to the Christian. You observe that all through it is a personal prayer. Our prayers must not always be personal. Our Savior has taught us not to say, “My Father,” but “Our Father which are in Heaven.” Yet, for all that, he who never prays for himself in the singular never prayed aright for others in the plural. If you have never said, “Lord, remember me,” you have not got so far as the thief on the cross. You are not qualified at all to go as far as Abraham on the plains of Mamre, when he interceded for others. He that has the largest heart must see to it that his own personal salvation is secure. So, dear Friend, professing Christian, let me ask you to take the prayer in the first person singular, and say, “Lord, remember me with the favor which You bear to Your chosen.” I pray it. If You call me, Lord, to minister to this great people, as my day is, so may my strength be. As You have dealt with others of Your servants in a like position, deal so with me. Elders and deacons, with your responsibility upon you, pray that the God of Stephen and the God of Philip will be with you and extend to you the favor which He gave to Elders and deacons of old! Mothers, fathers, ask for the Grace that He gives to Christian parents. Children, servants, ask for the Grace that He has been known to give to those in your position. You who are rich, pray often that you may not miss the Divine Favor, for these things are often dangerous. You that are poor, pray that you may have this to sweeten all—to make your little to be enough! You that are in health, pray this lest the vigor of your body be the weakness of your soul. And you upon whose cheek there is the hectic flush of consumption—you that are weak and near departure—you have already got your death-song ready. Here it is—“Lord, remember me! Remember me, O Lord, with the favor which You have given Your people! O visit me with Your salvation!” I leave that prayer with every Christian heart, here, and ask that it may be engraved there by the Holy Spirit. This prayer is also—  
II. A FITTING PRAYER FOR DEPRESSED, DESPONDING SOULS.  
They are God’s people and we give to them, now, this prayer, and we trust that as they pray it they may have “the oil of joy given them for mourning, and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness.” I ask them to look very briefly, but with all their eyes, at this prayer. You will note that here is a case in which a good man may seem to be forgotten. It is a good man that wrote this Psalm—an Inspired man, and yet he says, “Remember me, O Lord.” Did he think himself forgotten? He feared he was. There have been others of God’s saints who have endured this fear. Yes, a whole Church has sometimes labored under it. Zion said, “My God has forsaken me. My God has forgotten me.” Thus you may be, as you think, forgotten—and yet you may be very dear to God—as dear as you ever were!

Notice, next, that when you, child of God, come into this condition, the very best prayer you can pray is a sinner’s prayer. Why do I call this a sinner’s prayer? Why, because it so reminds me of the dying thief. “Lord, remember me,” was such a suitable prayer for him. Oh, child of God, if you doubt your own salvation, do not dispute about it, but go as a sinner! Use a sinner’s prayer! Begin where the dying thief began with, “Lord, remember me.” I would recommend to every Christian who is in the dark and has lost his evidences, to go at once by the old track that sinners have trodden so long. “I will go to Jesus, though my sin does, like a mountain, rise. I know His courts. I will enter in.” Go to Him! Go even now!  
And you will observe, too, that for a desponding soul it is good to remember that everything it can obtain in the future by God must be by favor. “Remember me, O Lord, with the favor.” I dwelt on this when speaking to the child of God in the light, but it is even more important that we should dwell on this when speaking to the child of God in the dark, for the danger is when you are desponding to begin to become legal. Your own conscience and Satan together will be setting you upon legal methods of getting comfort. They are all fruitless! Go on the track of Grace. Free Grace is what you need, and nothing else will suit you. Cry, “Lord, remember me with Your favor! Give me what You could not give me as a mere matter of justice! Deal with me as you could not deal with me if You did see me in myself as guilty before You! Deal favorably with Your servant. Have a favor towards me, for this alone can restore me.”  
And then, next, it is good for a person who is in distress to remember that God’s favor towards His own people does not change, for evidently this good man, though he asked God to remember him, had not any doubt whatever that God had a favor towards His own people! Nothing like being sound in Doctrine to help you towards comfort. If a man shall doubt the Perseverance of the Saints, and believe that God will cast away His people, I really do not see what he has to do when he is brought into distress of mind. But if he still holds to this, “Truly the Lord is good to Israel—to such as are of a clean heart. As for me, He may have forgotten me. I fear I am not one of His, but I know He would not forget His own”— why, then the fact of the Immutability of God towards His people becomes, as it were, as an argument, and we come before the Lord with better heart and greater hope, and say, “Lord, since You never change towards them, introduce me into their number and let Your eternal love pour forth itself on my poor, broken, disconsolate spirit. Remember me— poor, fallen, backsliding me—with the favor, the free Grace which You have towards Your people.” It is well to hold to the Truth of God, for it may serve us like an anchor in the day of storm!  
Once again. Let me speak to the depressed, and remind them that the prayer is instructive, for it shows that all that is needed for a forsaken, forgotten spirit is that God should visit it again. “Remember me, O Lord. Anybody else’s remembering can do me no good, but if You only give one thought toward Your servant, it is all done! Lord, I have been visited by the pastor, and he tried to cheer me. I have had a visit in the preaching of the Gospel in the morning and the evening of Your Day. I went to Your Table and I did not get encouragement even there. But, Lord, You visit me!” A visit from Christ is the cure for all spiritual diseases! I have frequently reminded you of that in the address to the Church at Laodicea. The Church at Laodicea was neither cold nor hot, and Christ said that He would spew it out of His mouth—but do you know how He speaks of it? As if He would cure it! “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me.” That is not an address to sinners. It is sometimes used so, but it is torn out of its context. It is evidently an address to a Church of God, or a child of God who has lost the Presence and the Light of God’s Countenance! All you need is a visit from Christ. All you need is that once again your communion should be restored—and I do bless the Lord that He can do that in a moment! He can make your soul, “before it is aware, like the chariots of Amminadib.” You may have come here tonight about as dead in soul as you could be, but the flashes of Eternal Life can reach you and kindle a soul within—within the ribs of your old dead nature—once again! You may have felt as if it were all over and the last spark of Grace had gone out. But when the Lord visits His people, He makes the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice and the desert to blossom as the rose! I pray it may be such a happy hour to you that the prayer may be fulfilled, “Visit me with Your salvation.” I have great sympathy with those who are cast down. May God, the Comfort of those who are cast down, comfort you! May He bring you out who are bound with chains! And you solitary ones, may He set you in families! And I do not know a wiser method for you to pursue than incessantly to cry unto Him and let this be the prayer, “Remember me—me—with the favor which You have toward Your people. O visit me with Your salvation.” And now our last point. This is—  
III. A VERY PROPER PRAYER FOR THE AWAKENED, BUT UNFORGIVEN SINNER.  
There are some in this house of that character. I know there are unforgiven sinners here. I only hope that some of them are awakened to know the danger of their state. If they are, may God help them to pray this prayer, because, first, it is a humble prayer. “Lord, remember me”— as much as to say, “Lord, give one thought to me. I am a poor miserable sinner. I am not worth much thought, but, Lord, do at least remember me. Pass me not, O Healer of sin-sick souls! Pass me not. Hear my cry! Answer my anguish! Regard the desires of my soul. Remember me!” It is an earnest prayer, too. No doubt it was earnest as this Inspired man prayed it. It breathes life as you read it. Oh, dear Heart, if you need a Savior, be in earnest for Him! If you can take “no,” for an answer, you shall have “no,” for an answer, but if it comes to this—“Give me Christ, or else I die!—I must have mercy!”—you shall have it! When you will have it, you shall have it. When God stirs you up to agonize for a blessing, the blessing shall not delay. Note that this prayer, which I can recommend to you, is not only humble and earnest, but it is a prayer directed in the right way. It is to God alone. “Remember me, O Lord. Visit me, O lord, with Your salvation.” All our help lies yonder. There is none here. There is none in any man. No priest can help you—no friend nor minister. When you apply to us we might say what the King of Israel said to the woman in Samaria, when it was shut up with siege, “If the Lord does not help you, from where shall I help you? Out of the winepress, or from the barn floor?” There is nothing we can do! “Vain is the help of man!” Turn your eyes to God alone—to the Cross where Christ suffered. Look there, and there, only, and be this your prayer, “Lord, remember me!” When the thief was dying, he did not say, “John, pray for me.” John was there. He did not look on the mother of Christ and say, “Holy Virgin, pray for me.” He might have said it. He did not turn to any of the Apostles, or the holy company that were around the Cross. He knew which way to look and, turning his dying eyes to Him who suffered on the center Cross, he had no prayer but this, “Lord, remember me.” ‘Tis all you need! Pray to God, and God alone, for from Him, alone, must mercy come to you!  
Observe, again, O Sinner, if you would use this prayer, that it is a personal prayer for you. “Lord, remember me.” Oh, if we could get men to think of themselves, half the battle would be over! Who are you? Who are you? I would put this prayer into your mouth, whoever you may be, “Lord, I have been a Sabbath-Breaker this day. All the early part of it was spent as it ought not to be. But, Lord, remember me.” “O God, I have been a drunkard. I have broken all the laws of sobriety—have even blasphemed Your name. But Lord, remember me!” Is there one here into whose mouth I might put such words as these, “Lord, I stand trembling before You, for I am a woman that is a sinner. Lord, remember me! Call on me with the favor that You have toward Your people. As you did look on the woman of Samaria, so look on me”? Is there one here that has been a thief—almost ashamed to have the word mentioned, lest those who sit near should look at you? Well, this is peculiarly the thief’s prayer, “Lord, remember me.” How I wish I could come round now! I would not know who you were, but, oh, if I could, I would put this right into your heart, “Lord, remember me!” Up in the back gallery, where you can hardly hear, and cannot see, it is a good place to pray in—a capital place, there hidden away in the corner, to breathe the cry, “O God, remember me!”  
Another thing about this prayer is that it is a Gospel prayer. It says, “Remember me with Your favor.” Everything a sinner gets must come by favor. It cannot come anyway else, for if you get what you deserve, you will get no love, no mercy, no Grace. Oh, Sinner, do come to God on the footing of favor and say, “For Your name’s sake, and for Your mercy’s sake, have pity upon poor undeserving me.” It is a Gospel prayer.  
Once again. It seems to me to be an argumentative prayer. “Where is the argument?” you ask. Why, here, “You have had favor towards Your people, Lord, have favor towards me.” It is always an argument for a man to do a kindness to you if he has done a kindness to others. We generally say, if we are very poor, “Such a one has been helping poor people like me.” There is a sort of implied argument that he will help you, being in the same case. Can you see it? There are the gates of Heaven. Can you bear the luster of those massive pearls? I want you not to look at them, however. Do you see

 them? Do you see them who are streaming through in long lines? They go through like a mighty river! There are hundreds, there are thousands, there are tens of thousands of them! Who are they? Who are they? They are, all of them, sinners—just such as I am, dear Friend—just such as you are! They are all clothed in white, now, but their robes were once all black. Ask them, and you will hear them say they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Ask all of them how it is they passed so happily through that pearly gate into the golden streets of the city, and they will all tell you, with united breath—  
*“Ascribe salvation to the Lamb,  
Redemption to His death.”*  
Oh, I will even creep in that way! Ah, through the sinners’ Savior I hope to find a passage to the sinners’ Heaven, where sinners washed white dwell forever! There is an argument in the prayer. I hope you will have skill to use it till you prevail.  
Once again, I commend this prayer to the awakened sinner because it is a prayer for a helpless soul, for it says, Oh, “visit me with Your salvation.” There are patients in London who would be very glad to be received into a hospital. They would be glad if they could be carried tomorrow morning into some one of those noble institutions, there to be cared for. But there are people worse off than they are, for there are some that could not be carried to a hospital, for they would die on the road! If they are ever to be healed at all, they are in such a bad case that the doctor must come to them. Oh, and that is a sinner’s case, too, and some feel it! And, therefore, the prayer, “Visit me with Your salvation.” “Here, Lord, I lie before You, so ruined by my sin that I can scarcely turn even an eye to the Cross, I am so blind. ‘Tis true Your Grace can save, but my hand is paralyzed, and I cannot grasp Your Grace! ‘Tis true Your love can penetrate my heart, but, ah, my heart feels so hard, how can Your love get into it? O Savior, You must do all for me, for mine is a desperate case!”  
Such cases Christ loves. He came to seek and save—not the half-lost, but the lost! Commit your desperate case into His hands, who has saved desperate sinners thousands of times, and will save them yet! I do pray that before you rest tonight—before you go to your bed and dare close your eyes—this may be your heart’s prayer, “O Lord, remember me with the favor which You have toward Your people. Visit me with Your salvation.”  
I can do no more than leave it in the hands of the Eternal Spirit. May He bless the Word, for Christ Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 116:10-19; SONG OF SOLOMON 2:1-7.**

PSALM 116:10-19.  
The whole Psalm is one of joyous thanksgiving because of God’s mercy to the singer. He had been in deep waters of trial and affliction, but had not been allowed to sink. He had known fierce assaults of sin that threatened tearful eyes and falling, stumbling stops, but God had upheld and strengthened him. As he recalls all this, he longs to make some return by way of praise and witness to others. Hence he now inquires.

Verses 10, 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. And uncommonly near the truth he came, even though he was in a hurry in saying it, for if you trust in any men, they will be liars to you. They will fail you, either from lack of faithfulness, or else from lack of power. There are pinches where the kindest hand cannot succor. There are times of sorrow when she who is the partner of your bosom cannot find you alleviation. Then you will have to come to God, and God alone—and you will never find Him fail you! The brooks of the earth are dry in summer and frozen in winter. All my fresh springs are in You, my God, and there neither frost nor drought can come. Happy man who has got right away from everything to his God!

12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits towards me? Here we see gratitude is springing up in this man’s breast. He lives upon God and he loves God, and now the question comes, “What shall I do for God?” Service is not first. We make a mistake when we begin with that. No, we begin as he did, with, “I love the Lord.” Tell what the Lord has done for you and then go on to, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”

13-15. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. We do well to notice those deaths, for God notices them. They are among His precious things. And if God thinks so much of dying saints, depend upon it, He will not forget the living ones! He will help us. He will help us to the end.

16. O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid. You have loosed my bonds. What a sweet thing to be the servant of God! Well does David say it twice over. Well does he delight to look upon himself as a slave that was born in his Master’s house. “My mother,” he says, “was one of Your servants. I am the son of Your handmaid.” Oh, it is a blessed thing to be able to be God’s every way—to feel, in looking back, “I am not only His by redemption and by the new birth, but I seem as if I was bound to be His by a long ancestry of men and women whom His Sovereign Grace called to Himself.” Grace does not run in the blood, but it is a great mercy when it runs side by side with it— and when the handmaiden of the Lord is mother of a man who is a child of God as well as her child! “You have loosed my bonds.” You are never quite free—you have never got your bonds all loosed—till you can doubly feel the bonds of God. Read that—“I am Your servant. I am Your servant.” That is two blows. “You have loosed my bonds.” There is no freedom except in perfect subjection to the will of God! When every thought is brought into captivity to the mind of God, then every thought is free. You have heard much of the freedom of the will. There is no freedom of the will till Grace has bound the will in fetters of Divine Affection! Then is it free, and not till then. “I am Your servant—Your servant. You have loosed my bonds.”

17. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. He has been doing it. What a man has done he will do. Oh, it is a blessed thing that the children of God at last catch a habit of devotion. Just as the sinner continues in his sin, so may I venture to say, “Shall the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” If so, then he that has once heartily learned to praise his God may begin to forget to do so! Use is second nature, and the holy use to which God has put us, by His Grace, shall be our nature forever!

18, 19. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. In the courts of the LORD’S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD. I see that David liked company. He would have been happy here, though we meet under conditions not wholly pleasant. He would have been glad to be in the midst of a smiling company of grateful saints who could all say, “That is true, David. What you have written of yourself, you might have written of each one of us. And we can each one say, ‘I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications.’”

*SONG OF SOLOMON 2:1-7.*  
We believe that this song sets forth the mutual love of Christ and His believing people. It is a book of deep mystery, not to be understood except by the initiated. But those who have learned a life of sacred fellowship with Jesus will bear witness that when they desire to express what they feel, they are compelled to borrow expressions from this matchless Song! Samuel Rutherford, in his famous letters, when he spoke of the love of Christ as shed abroad in his heart, perhaps was scarcely conscious that he continually reproduced the expressions of the Song, but so it is. They were naturally fresh enough from him, but they came from this wonderful Book. It stands in the middle of the Bible. It is the Holy of Holies—the central point of all. Thus He speaks—the glorious “greater than Solomon.”

Verses 1, 2. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters. So does Christ’s Church spring up singular for her beauty—as much different from the world—as much superior thereto as the lily to the thorns. Now see how she responds and answers to him.

3. As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. To Him there is none like she—to her there is none like He. Jesus values His people. He paid His heart’s blood for their redemption and, “unto you that believe, He is precious.” No mention shall be made of coral or of rubies in comparison with Him. Nothing can equal Him. There are other trees in the woods, but He is the lone one bearing fruit—the citron tree, whose golden apples are delicious to our taste. Let us come up and pluck from His loaded branches this very night!

4. He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love. You and I know what this means—at least, many here do. You know how delightful it is to feel that it is not now the banner of war, but the banner of love that waves above your head, for all is peace between you and your God! And now you are not brought to the prison or to the place of labor, but to the banqueting house. Act worthily of the position which you occupy! If you are in a banqueting house, take care to feast.

5. Refresh me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. Oh, that I knew Him better! Oh, that I loved Him more! Oh, that I were more like He! Oh, that I were with Him! “I am sick of love.”

6, 7. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand embraces me. I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awake my love till He please. If He is with me, may nothing disturb Him—nothing cause Him to withdraw Himself. Our Lord Jesus is very jealous, and when He manifests Himself to His people, a very little thing will drive Him away like the hinds and the roes that are very timid—so communion is a very delicate and dainty thing. It is soon broken. Oh, may God grant tonight that nothing may happen to the thoughts of any of you by which your fellowship with Christ should be destroyed!

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1454B Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE POOR MAN’S PRAYER  
NO. 1454B

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You bear unto Your people: O visit me with Your salvation; that I may see the good of Your chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,***

***that I may glory with Your inheritance.”  
Psalm 106:4, 5.***

BELOVED, we always reckon it a very hopeful sign when a man begins to think of personal religion. Merely to come with the crowd and professedly to worship is but poor work. But when a man gets to feel the weight of his own sin and to confess it with his heart before God—when he wants a Savior for himself and begins to pray alone that he may find that Savior—when he is not content with being the child of pious parents, or with having been introduced into the Church in his childhood after the fashion of certain sects. When he pines for real godliness, personal religion, true conversion—it is a blessed sign, indeed! When a stag separates itself from the herd, we reckon that the dart has struck home—the wound is grievous and the creature seeks solitude—for a bleeding heart cannot bear company. Blessed are God’s woundings, for they lead to a heavenly healing!

We are still more glad when this desire for personal salvation leads a man to prayer—when he really begins to cry out before God on his own account—when he has done with the prayers he used to repeat by rote like a parrot and bursts out with the language of his heart! Though that language may be very broken, or consist only of sighs and tears and groans, it is a happy circumstance. “Behold, he prays” was enough for Ananias—he was sure that Paul must be converted! And when we find a man praying and praying earnestly for personal salvation, we feel that this is the finger of God and our heart is glad within us!

The passage before us is one of those earnest personal supplications which we love to hear from any lips. I will read it again and then proceed to use it in two or three ways. “Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You bear unto Your people: O visit me with Your salvation; that I may see the good of Your chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance.” Now, first, this is a very suitable prayer for the humble Believer—it was a humble Believer who first uttered it. Next, it would make a very suitable petition for a penitent backslider. And, thirdly, it would be a very sweet Gospel prayer for a seeker. May the Spirit of God bless the Word to each of these characters.

I. First, then, this is an admirable prayer for a poor humble Christian. I think I can hear him using the very words. Notice with interest the first fear felt by this poor trembling Christian. He is afraid that he is such a little one that God will forget him and so he begins with, “O remember me with the favor which You bear to Your people.” I know this man well. I think very much of him, but he thinks very little of himself. I admire his

humility, but he often complains that he feels pride in his heart. He is a true Believer, but he is a sad doubter. Poor man, he often hangs his head, for he has such a sense of his own unworthiness. I only wish he had an equal sense of Christ’s fullness to balance his humility.

He is on the road to Heaven, but he is often afraid he is not and that makes him watch every step he takes. I almost wish some confident professors were altogether as doubtful as he is if they would be half as cautious. He is afraid to put one foot before another lest he should go wrong and yet he mourns his lack of watchfulness! He is always complaining of the hardness of his heart and yet he is tenderness itself! Dear Soul—you should hear him pray! His prayers are among the most earnest and blessed you ever listened to, but when he is finished, he is afraid he never ought to have opened his mouth. He is not fit to pray before others, he says. He thinks his prayers the poorest that ever reach the Throne of God. Indeed, he is afraid they do not get there but spend themselves as wasted breath.

He has his occasional gleams of sunlight and when he feels the love of God in his soul he is as merry as the cricket on the hearth. There is not a man out of Heaven more joyous than he when his hope revives. But, oh, he is so tender about sin that when he finds himself growing a little cold, or in any measure backsliding, he begins to flog himself—at which I am very glad, but he also begins somewhat to doubt his interest in his Lord, of which I am not glad, but pity him much and blame him, too, though with much sympathy for him. Now, I am not quite sure about this good man’s name—it may be Little-Faith, or Feeble-Mind. Or is it Mr. Despondency I am thinking of? Or am I talking of Miss Much-Afraid? Or is it Mr. Ready-to-Halt? Well, it is someone of that numerous family.

This poor soul thinks, “Surely God will forget me!” No, no, dear Heart, He will not forget you! It is wonderful how God thinks of little things. Mungo Park picked up a little bit of moss in the desert and as he remarked how beautifully it was variegated, he said, “God is here: He is thinking of the moss and, therefore, He will think of me.” Once upon a time a little plant grew right in the middle of the forest and the trees stretched for many a mile all around it and it said to itself, “The sunlight will never get at me. I have a little flower which I would gladly open, but it cannot come forth till the sunbeam cherishes me. Alas, it will never reach me! Look at the thick foliage! Look at the huge trunks of those towering oaks and mighty beeches—these will effectually hide the sun from my tiny form.”

But in due season the sun looked through the trees like a king through the lattices and smiled on the little flower, for there never was a flower that God has not thought of and provided for! Say you not right well that “each blade of grass has its own drop of dew,” and do you think that God will forget you, little as you are? He knows when swallows fly and when ants awake and gather their food and will He not think of you? Because you are little you must not suspect the love of your heavenly Father! Mother, which child is that which you never forget? If you ever went to bed at night and left one of the children out of doors, I know which one it was not. It was not the babe which lies helpless in your bosom. You never forget that. And you helpless ones, you timid trembling ones, if the Lord must forget any, it would be the strong, but certainly not you! As you breathe the prayer, “Remember me with the favor that You bear to Your people,” the Lord answers you, “I do earnestly remember you still.”

Observe next, that this poor trembling heart seems to be in great trouble for fear the Lord should pass it by, but at the same time feels that every good thing it can possibly receive must come from the Lord and must be brought to it by the Lord. Note the words—“O visit me with Your salvation,” as if he had said—“Lord, I cannot come to You! I am too lame to come, I am too weak to come, but visit me. O Lord, I am like the wounded man between Jericho and Jerusalem—I am half dead, and cannot stir. Come to me, Lord, for I cannot move to You. Visit me, for only Your visits can preserve my spirit. I am so wounded and sorely broken and undone, that if You do not visit me with Your salvation even as if I never had been saved before, I must be lost.”

Now, poor Trembler, let me whisper a half word into your ear and may God the Holy Spirit make it a comfort to you. You need not say, if you have a broken heart, “Lord, visit me.” Do you not know that He dwells in you, for is it not written, “To this man will I look and with this man will I dwell, even with him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at My Word”? Are you not the very person? I wish you could rejoice at God’s Word, but as you cannot, I am glad you tremble at it, for you are the man that God has promised to dwell with. “Trembles at My Word”—lay hold on that and believe that the Lord looks towards you and dwells with you!

What a plaintive prayer this is! Carefully consider that this poor, weak, humble, trembling one longs to partake in the blessings which the Lord gives to His own people and in the joy which He has in store for them. This is the way in which he speaks, “I hear many Christians around me say that they know and are persuaded—O that I had a little of their certainty! I hear them speak so confidently, with such full assurance and I see the light leap out of their eyes when they talk about their sweet Lord and Master and all His love to them—oh, how I wish I could talk so! Poor me, I am only able to say, ‘Lord, I believe: help You my unbelief.’ I see them sitting at a loaded table and they seem to feast most abundantly, but as for me, I am glad it is written that the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the Master’s table, for if I get a crumb now and then, I feel so happy with it!

“But I wish I could sit and feast where others of God’s children do. Oh that I could talk of rapt fellowship and close communion and joy and overflowing bliss! They tell me, some of them, that they sit down on the doorstep of Heaven and look within and see the golden streets and that, sometimes, they hear stray notes from the harps of the blessed ones in the faroff country. Oh, how I wish I had a sip of these joys! But, woe is me, I dwell in Mesech and sojourn in the tents of Kedar—the only music that I hear is the din of a sinful world—the viols of them that make merry in wantonness. I miss those precious things which the saints delight in.”

Poor sorrowing Heart, let me say to you, and say in God’s name—If you love your Lord, all things are yours. They are yours freely to enjoy even at this moment! The Lord denies you no Covenant blessing. Make bold to appropriate the sacred joys, for if you are the least child in the family, yet the heritage of God’s children is the same for everyone! There is no choice thing that God will keep away from you. No, if there is one morsel more dainty than another it is reserved for such as you are! Be bold, then! If you are the Benjamin in the family, you shall have Benjamin’s mess which is 10 times larger than any other! He will comfort you and bless you.

Only be of good cheer and when you are praying, “Favor me with the favor which You bear to Your people,” let your faith hear Him say, “I am your portion.” Rejoice in the Lord your God! Lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees. Is not my text a sweet prayer for you? Pray it in faith and be at peace.

II. We will now look another way and say that our TEXT IS A SUITABLE PETITION FOR A POOR PENITENT BACKSLIDER. I know there are backsliders here, though, alas, I am not sure that they are penitent. Only the Lord can read their hearts. But if they are penitent, I can hardly conceive a more suitable petition for them than that which is before us. It is clear that this poor, pleading backslider feels that he has forgotten His God. Have you done that? You have been a Church member and you have gone sadly astray. Have you quite forgotten His Commandments? You thought you loved Him. You used to pray, at one time. You had some enjoyment in reading and in hearing the Word.

But now you find your pleasure somewhere else. You have left your first love and gone after many lovers. But, oh, if the Lord is gracious to you, you are lamenting your forgetfulness and though you have not remembered Him, the prayer leaps to your lips, “Lord, remember me!” Blessed be His name, He does not so easily forget us as we forget Him. If you are a truly penitent backslider, your feelings of repentance prove that God remembers you! It is He that sets you weeping and makes you sorrow for your sin! If you had been altogether forgotten of God, you would not have any desire to return to Him! But those inward pangs, those secret throes, those desires to be restored to the Lord—these prove that He remembers you with the favor which He has towards His people.

And, then, I think your next trouble will be this— you feel that you have lost your fellowship with Christ and you are right in so feeling, for, “How can two walk together except they are agreed?” How could Christ have fellowship with you in the ways of folly? Do you think Christ would come and talk comfortably to you while you are frivolous, or while you are unclean? How could that be? All joyful communion between your soul and God is broken and well may you pray, “O visit me with Your salvation. Come back to me, Lord. Come and dwell in me again—

*‘Why should my foolish passions roam?  
Where can such sweetness be  
As I have tasted in Your love,  
As I have found in Thee?’*

Come back, my Lord, and visit me with Your salvation.” Is not this a prayer made on purpose for you?

And, next, you observe in the text that the poor backslider is longing to get a sight of the good things which for a long time have been hid from him. He Cries, “That I may see the good of Your chosen.” He has been out among the swine, but he could not fill his belly with the husks. He has been hungering and thirsting and now he remembers that in his Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare. Backslider, do you remember that tonight? You know you are not happy and you begin to perceive that you never will be happy while you are living in the far country. If you had not been a child of God you might have made a happy worldling after the sort of happiness that worldlings know, but you are spoiled for a worldling if you have ever known the love of God! And you have known that, or else you have been, indeed, a hypocrite! Do you not sigh to the Lord to give you these good things again?

Well, He will freely give them to you and He will not upbraid you. Come and try Him! He is ready to press you to His bosom and to forget and forgive the past and accept you in the Beloved. The poor backslider praying in the words of my text longs to taste once more the joy he used to feel and, therefore, he says, “That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation.” And, again, he wants to be able to speak as he once could—“that I may glory with Your inheritance.” Poor man, he is ashamed to speak to sinners. He hangs his head in company, for there are some that call him a turncoat. He does not like to have it known that he was once a Christian and, therefore, he comes stealing in to the assembly of the saints as if he hoped no one would know him.

There he is, but he feels half ashamed to be there—and yet he wishes that he were once more with the Christian brotherhood and could rejoice with them. My poor Friend, you used to be bold as a lion for Christ and now you turn tail and fly! How can you be bold with all those inconsistencies? There was a time when you might have made a martyr, but now what a coward you are! And who wonders that you are so when they know that secret sin has sapped and undermined your profession and made you weak as water? I beg you to pray the prayer—“That I may glory with Your inheritance.” You will never again make your boast in the Lord till you are restored, till you come back as you came at first with the old cry, “Father, I have sinned before You and am no more worthy to be called Your son.” Come back even now, my Brother, and get another application of the blood of sprinkling. Look again to Jesus!

Ah, and I may here say, even if you have not backslidden, look again to Jesus! Those of us who have not fallen had better look to Him with our Brothers and Sisters who have fallen, for there is the same blessing needed by us all. We have all wandered to some extent. Come, let us look at those dear wounds anew! Can you not see Him? I think He hangs before me now! The crown of thorns is on His head and His eyes are full of languid pity and tearful grief. I see His face stained with spit and black and blue with cruel bruises! I see His hands—they are fountains of gore. I see His feet—they gush with rivulets of crimson blood. I look upon Him and I cry, “Was ever grief like Yours, O King of Sorrows?”

And as I look I remember that the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of all His people—and, looking—my sin departs from me because it was laid on Him! Looking, my heart yearns to love and then yearns to leap! Look

ing , I come back to where I stood before and now, once again, Christ is my All and I rejoice in Him! Have you gone through that process, Backslider? If you have done so while I have been speaking, let us praise God together!

III. The last use I have to make of my text will, I hope, be beneficial to many here present. It is this—THIS IS A VERY SWEET PRAYER FOR A POOR SORROWING SEEKER. I beg all who desire conversion to remember this prayer. They had better jot it down and carry it home with them, or, better still, breathe it to Heaven at once. Consider it well. To begin with, it is a sinner’s prayer. “Remember me, O Lord!” A sinner’s prayer, I say, for the dying thief rejoiced to use the words. He could not have reached down for a prayer-book and said a collect, poor man, when he was dying—and there was no need he should. This is the best of prayers— “Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.”

Trembling Sinner, what suited the dying thief may well suit you! Breathe it now, “Forget my sins, my Father, but remember me! Forget my delays; forget my rejecting of a Savior; forget the hardness of my heart, but, oh, remember me! Let everything pass away from Your mind and be blotted from Your memory but, dear Father, by the love of the Lord Jesus, remember me!” Sinner, do not go home without presenting that prayer to God! Note, again, it is the prayer of a lost one. “Visit me with Your salvation.” Nobody wants salvation unless he is lost. People may talk about salvation who do not feel that they are lost, but they do not know anything about it and do not really desire it.

Lost Soul, where are you? Are you lost in a thousand ways—lost even to society? Well here is a fit prayer for you—“Visit me with Your salvation.” Jesus Christ has not come to seek and to save those who do not need saving, but He has come on purpose to seek and to save those who are lost. You are the man He came to bless. Look to Him and you shall find that He is the Savior you require. “Visit me with Your salvation”—I cannot get this prayer into your hearts, but God can—and I am praying in my own soul that many of you in the galleries, or down below there, may now be crying, “Visit me with Your salvation.”

Farther, remember that our text is the prayer of one who has a dim eye—“That I may see the good of Your chosen.” We have told the seeker to look to Jesus, but he complains, “I try to look, but I cannot see.” Beloved Seeker, I do not know that you are bid to see. You are bid to look and if you could not see when you looked, you would at least have obeyed the Gospel command. The looking, the looking would bring salvation to you! But for dim eyes Christ is the great cure. He can take away the cataract and remove the gutta serena. Pray tonight, “Lord, open my blind eyes that I may see the good of Your chosen.” Then it is a prayer for a heavy heart. “That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation.” The seeking soul moans out, “O that I had a little joy, or even a trembling hope! If it were ever so small a portion of light I should be glad.” Pray for joy. The Lord waits to give it and if you believe in Jesus your joy shall be full.

And in the last place—not to detain you till you are weary—our text is the prayer of a spirit that is humble and laid in the very dust. It cries to God to enable it to glory with His inheritance because it is stripped of all other glory, emptied of its own boasts. Practically its plea is, “Lord, give me to boast in Your mercy and Your goodness, for I have nothing else to boast of.” Now, beloved Hearer, this prayer I would most earnestly press upon you and I would press it upon you for these reasons.

Just think for a moment. Supposing you are living now without seeing the good of God’s chosen, without being saved, what a wretched life it is to live! I cannot understand what men do without God! I cannot comprehend how they live. Do you have no cares? “Oh,” you say, “we have anxieties in shoals.” Well, where do you take them? I find I have troubles enough, but I have a God to take them to! What do

 you do with many troubles and no God? Do your children never distress your mind? How can you live with bad children and no God? Do you ever lose money in your business? Do you ever feel distracted? Do you ever say, “What shall I do? Which way shall I turn?”

I suppose you do. Then what do you do without a helper or a guide? Poor weak thing as I am, I run under the shelter of my Father’s wings and I feel safe enough. But where do you go? Where do you fly? What is your comfort? I suppose you are something like the poor creatures condemned to death in old times to whom they gave a stupefying drink so that they might die without feeling the horror of death—surely you must be under a strong delusion that you can believe a lie, for if you were in your senses you could not do without a God—no, not with your beautiful gardens and fine parks and wealth and riches and much less—many of you—with your poverty and hard labor!

Poor man without a God, how do you keep up your spirits? What comfort is there in your life? No prayer in the morning, no prayer at night— what days, what nights! Oh, men, I could as soon think of living without eating, or living without breathing, as living without prayer! Wretched naked spirits your souls must be without God to cover them! But if it is bad to live without Christ—and I am sure it is—what will it be to die without Him? What will it be to look into the future and find no light—no light and nobody that can bring you any? You have sent to the minister and he has spoken with you, but he cannot help you. You have had the prayers of your family who are sobbing at the thought of losing you, but you are looking out, alone, like one that gazes upon an angry sea in a cold winter’s storm—and you can see nothing but the palpable dark.

Or, to change the metaphor, you are like a man on yonder wreck. Look, he is clinging to the mast! He hears the blast go whistling by him and soon it comes back howling around him, as if hungry for its prey. He can hear the seabirds screaming in the sky and they seem to prophesy his doom. The waves break over him, drenching him with their brine till he is ready to freeze as he hangs between Death’s awful jaws. The lifeboat has been there and carried off all it can and it will never come back and, though he clings with desperation, he knows it is a forlorn hope. He will drift out to sea and his corpse will lie where pearls lie deep, in the caverns where many thousand skeletons have bleached these many years. His case is terrible to the last degree and yet it is a feeble picture of a soul leaving the body without an interest in Christ’s salvation!

Before you get into that state, cry to God, “Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that You bear unto Your people. O visit me with Your salvation!” But the mist darkens and the tempest lowers in tenfold fury when we come to think what it must be to rise again from the tomb without Christ. When that last shrill clarion has sounded and every grave and cemetery shall have given up their sleepers. When the sea has yielded up the dead that are there and battlefields are swarming with the myriad slain that live again! When in the sky shall be seen the Great White Throne and upon it the Son of Man who bled for sinners, now come to judge and to condemn His adversaries—what will men then do if they have no personal religion, no interest in Christ, no portion in His salvation? Scripture tells us that they will ask the rocks to hide them and the hills to cover them! But they have no hearts of compassion—they will yield no shelter. There will be no refuge for the ungodly and nothing before them except the fiery indignation and wrath of God. “Turn! Turn! Why will you die?”

This is a common scene to many of you, this great gathering in the Tabernacle. I must confess I cannot look upon it without emotion, though I see it twice each Sunday. Here are all of you, and I, a lone man, standing here to talk to you in God’s name. It is as much as my soul is worth if I am not earnest with you, but ah, I am not half as earnest as I ought to be. Yet hear me once more! I am a true prophet at this hour—when I warn you that you shall see this sight again if you reject the Savior. Across the flames of Hell you will see it and you will say to yourself, “The preacher warned us. He told us to cry to God for mercy. He pointed us to the Savior. He bade us pray and pray then and there.”

You will remember my entreaties and then you will renew your agony with a wail which shall never end! You will cry, “God called, but I refused! He stretched out His hands, but I regarded Him not and now the day of Grace is past and the Christ whom I despised laughs at my calamity— there is no hope—no hope! I knocked too late at Mercy’s door. My lamp went out. I was a foolish virgin and I am shut out in outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

In the name of the everlasting God I pray you submit yourselves to Christ your Lord at once and you shall live! Amen. Amen.  
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 51.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—51, 584, 556.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1886 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S REMEMBRANCE OF HIS COVENANT

NO. 1886

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 14, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry: And He remembered, for their sake, His Covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies.” Psalm 106:44, 45.**

THIS Psalm deserves to be read very carefully. It mentions many of the afflictions of God’s ancient people, but it clearly sets forth that their afflictions were the distinct result of their rebellions and sins. It is not so with all the afflictions of God’s people. It is written, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” And again, “Every branch in me that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Yet it is often so to this day that the servants of God smart because of disobedience. They are chastened for their sin, as it is written, “You only have I known of all the people of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.” Sin in a child of God cannot go unchastened. The rod of chastisement is included in the Covenant and, if we are in the Covenant, the Lord will keep His promise. “If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.”

The miseries of Israel of old were distinctly the result of their sins. They lived under a dispensation in which there was a visible reward for obedience and a prompt temporal punishment for disobedience. Therefore one might suppose that if the people fell into affliction willfully and through their own fault, the Lord might see fit to leave them in it. Did they not procure it unto themselves? Yet such is the abundant compassion of our God, that as soon as ever these people, smarting under the result of their sin, began to cry to Him, “He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry.” He might have justly said, “Go to the gods that you have set up; tell your sorrows to the calves that you have made. Ask succor at the hands of the dead whom you have consulted, or of the cruel deities to whom you have sacrificed your sons and your daughters.” But instead of thus meeting them in righteous wrath, He is tender and full of compassion for them!

I will read you the words again, for they are inexpressibly sweet— “Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry.” There is something very powerful about the cry of a child to its own parent and God, the most tender of all fathers, cannot bear to hear His children cry—

*“Such pity as a father has  
Unto his children dear,  
Like pity shows the Lord to such  
As worship Him in fear.”*

If there are any here who are brought low and sorely distressed through their own wrong-doing, let them, nevertheless, cry unto the Lord. Though it is because of your transgressions and your iniquities that you are afflicted, yet you may cry unto the Lord in your trouble and He will save you out of your distresses. Turn unto the hand that wounds you and that hand will bind you up. Turn unto the Lord in repentance and He will turn unto you in loving kindness.

What was the secret reason why God thus dealt with His people and heard their cry when they were in affliction through their sin? The secret reason was that, “for their sake He remembered His Covenant.” If He looked upon His people in their sin and their sorrow, He could not see anything in them to justify why He should have pity upon them. What they endured they richly deserved and He knew that if He took away His rod from them, they would go and commit the same wickedness again. They were not to be driven by judgment nor drawn by mercies. Though they humbled themselves for one moment, they would soon be proud again! The Lord could see nothing hopeful about them, nothing in their future any more than in their past which should plead for mercy.

Why should they be smitten any more? Or why should gentleness be further wasted on them? Was it not high time to say, “They are given to their idols, leave them alone, that We may see what their end will be”? One Divine reason prevented the infliction of justice—this, and this alone, sufficed—“for their sake He remembered His Covenant.” If He could not see anything in the erring people, or hope for anything from them, He looked to another source for a motive and an argument for mercy—He looked to the Covenant which He had made of old with their father, Abraham, when He said, “Surely, blessing I will bless you, and in you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Because He had once permitted that promise to go out of His mouth, He would not withdraw it! And when He heard their cry, He regarded their affliction. Is it not a great wonder that God not only is willing to give mercy, should there be a manifest reason for it, but that He, Himself, finds and makes the reason? When there is no motive for Grace discoverable to our anxious eyes, there is a fountain of self-created mercy in the Lord’s own heart—and this He causes to overflow and fill a channel of His own making! Though there is nothing in the creature, there is everything in the Covenant. If the Lord can find no plea in the character of the offender, He discovers an argument in

 Himself—He remembers His own Covenant and, for His own name’s sake, He deals in mercy with the guilty!

Now, observe that in the text it does not say, “He remembered their covenant.” They stood at the foot of Sinai and said, “All these things which You have commanded, we will do!” They willingly, eagerly, hastily, loudly entered into a covenant with God, before whose terrible thunders they trembled. But that covenant they soon broke. Within a few days they had departed from the living God and fallen down before the image of an ox which eats grass! The Lord does not dwell upon the matter, since it would be to their destruction. He forgets their falseness and treachery and casts them behind His back. But what He does remember is His Covenant— “Nevertheless, for their sake, He remembered His Covenant.” This proves that the Covenant referred to must have been one of pure Grace.

Do you not see this? These people were in affliction through sin! If that Covenant had only been a Covenant of Works, in which they were to be rewarded for good and punished for evil, the more the Lord remembered that Covenant, the more He would have been bound to punish them for their offenses! But a Covenant which led Him to cease from punishing the guilty must have been one of only Grace! Is it not so? A Covenant was made long before that of Sinai, a Covenant of Grace which is called, in Scripture, “the everlasting Covenant.” This was made known to man in that first promise which was given to him at the gates of Paradise and it was, afterwards, revealed more clearly in the Lord’s Covenant with Noah and in His gracious promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Lord said to Abraham, “I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto you and to your seed after you.” This same Covenant, after being made more fully known in promises to Moses and other saintly men, was stated anew in the Lord’s dealings with His servant, David, whom He exalted as one chosen out of the people—“I have made a Covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David, My servant, Your seed will I establish forever and build up your throne to all generations.” Since then the Lord has given us promises, by His Prophets and Apostles, and specially in the Person and ministry of His only-begotten Son. All these various forms of manifestation relate to one and the same Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, which God had made with men in the person of His dear Son. It was that Covenant which God thought upon and, when He remembered it, He was able to deal with them upon terms of Grace, and even to change His hand and no longer crush them with afflictions, for He “repented according to the multitude of His mercies.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I want to show, this morning, how this remembrance of the Covenant on God’s part is the great ground of hope to all of us who are in Covenant with God. Indeed, the Lord’s mindfulness of His Covenant is the ground of hope to everyone of you, whether as yet you have embraced the Gospel promise or not! Inasmuch as God must, according to His Law, look upon you with anger on account of your sin, He has devised a way by which He can have regard unto the voice of your cry! Remembering His Covenant, He can pass by your transgressions and receive you as His returning children into the bosom of His love!

I. The first head of our discourse will be this—THE COVENANT EXISTS. God cannot remember, to any practical purpose, that which does not exist. Had the Covenant been repealed or abrogated, it could not have availed for God to remember it, except to strike the people into a more complete and settled despair. In love He remembered the Covenant as an abiding thing, according to the Word of God, “My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.”

Beloved, the Covenant is, in its own nature, everlasting. Dying David said, “Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” The Covenant is everlasting in its beginning, for it was made, “or ever the earth was,” between the first Divine Person of the sacred Trinity and the Second, on the behalf of His chosen. It is everlasting, also, as to its duration, for all things are still governed under this Covenant, and shall be, world without end. “And I will establish My Covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant.” “Thus says the Lord, if you can break My Covenant of the day, and My Covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My Covenant be broken with David, My servant.” Sooner shall the Covenant with the earth concerning seedtime and harvest be broken, than this Covenant of Grace. By everything that is permanent in the universe and by everything that is permanent in the Godhead, we are made to know that the Covenant of Grace is a fixed and settled thing and abides today as it always has done, for there is no variableness nor turning with Him from whom every good gift comes down.

The promises in Christ Jesus are Yes and Amen, to the Glory of God by us. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail, much less shall the Covenant of Divine Grace be disannulled. Thus says the Lord—“The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you.” God, in remembering His Covenant, falls back upon everlasting and immutable things!

Well may the Covenant of Grace be everlasting, for it was made with deliberation and foresight. If two persons enter into a contract and one, afterwards, wishes to escape from it, he may plead that he made the agreement in great haste, or under compulsion, or through being misinformed and over-persuaded—on any of these grounds he may object to the fulfillment of the covenant and thus may attempt to justify his failure to keep his word. Now, on God’s part, nothing of the kind can ever be urged, for He made the Covenant, Himself, on His own suggestion, according to the good pleasure of His will. It was a free Covenant, entered into through the love of His own heart, according to the wise counsel of His infinite mind. He made it knowing all that would happen in time or in eternity! When He made the promise that whoever believes in Christ Jesus shall have everlasting life, He knew that those who believed in Christ Jesus would, nevertheless, be fallible creatures and would commit mistakes and sins—He made the promise well knowing what Believers would be!

When He chose Abraham to be His friend, He knew what failures there would be in Abraham and in his seed. He made His choice deliberately, knowing the end from the beginning and foreseeing all the provocations which He would endure for 40 years in the wilderness—and how they would anger Him when they came to their own land. His choice of His redeemed was made deliberately and the promises made to them were given forth in the full foresight of all our unbelief, lukewarmness, backsliding, selfishness and folly! The Lord is not deceived in the subjects of His Grace. Hear how He puts it in the 48th of Isaiah, verse four—“Because I knew that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your brow brass.” And again, verse eight—“I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb.” Man’s love is blind, but the Lord’s love sees all things—

*“He saw me ruined in the Fall  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all.”*  
He knew as well in that day when He called me, by His Grace, what I

should be as He knows today! Every fault and folly stood clear before His vision and yet, notwithstanding all, He determined to give faith and, through faith, to give eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Dear Friends, every promise in the Bible is a part of the Covenant. The Covenant that now stands between the Believer and his God is on this wise, that you take Him to be your God and He takes you to be His people. He gives His promises to you and you rely upon them. He will bless you in this life and perfect you in the world to come. The tenor of the Covenant is not according to what you deserve, but according to the greatness of the Lord’s love! In making this Covenant, it is clear that God knew from the beginning what He was doing. He made no mistake and said no more than He intended to fulfill. He deliberately said, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” And in the day wherein we believed in Him, He guaranteed to us that we should never perish, neither should any pluck us out of His hand. This Covenant was made with such judicious deliberation and Infallible foresight, that there is no conceivable reason why it should be revoked. God is not a man that He should lie or repent.

Moreover—and this is a point to which every child of God delights to turn his eyes—that covenant was sealed and ratified in the most solemn manner. When God made a Covenant with Abraham, there was a slaying of sacrifices and a dividing of their bodies and the Lord, under the image of a burning lamp, passed between the pieces—in this solemn sacrificial manner was the Covenant established. But when the Lord made a Covenant with us, the seal He gave was much more precious. He took from His bosom His only-begotten Son and He gave Him to be a Covenant to His people. He died to make the eternal Covenant sure. Paul speaks of “the blood of the everlasting covenant” and when we come to the communion table we hear our Lord say, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” Jesus has gone into Heaven bearing with Him the blood of sprinkling! Can God deny His promise to His bleeding Son? Can He run back from the promise which He has made to the Only-Begotten in His death? “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.” Can these promises fail? Impossible! The very

 thought would be blasphemous! A Covenant which has been made in so solemn a manner, by the death of our great Surety and Sacrifice, can never be repealed, neglected, or changed!  
My dear Brothers and Sisters, we may rest fully sure that this Covenant will stand because the Divine Glory is wrapped up in it. Why did God promise to save men through faith in Christ Jesus? Why? That He might manifest to angels, principalities and powers, the splendor of His love and the riches of His Grace! He has selected for this reason the very worst of men, that in them He might show forth all long-suffering and display the magnificence of His pardoning love. He selected beings that were depraved and subject to grievous temptations that, by regenerating them by His Spirit and sustaining them by His Grace, He might display the greatness of His power! We are witnesses to time and to eternity of the Glory of the Lord! Are not these His own words—“This people have I formed for Myself: they shall show forth My praise”? The manifestation of the glorious love of God is the design of the Covenant—that where sin abounded, Grace might much more abound! He intends to show to all the ages His Truth, His faithfulness, His patience, His tenderness and His power. He designs to set Heaven and earth wondering until the whole universe breaks forth into the song—“Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains not His anger forever because He delights in mercy.”

God is more glorified in the Covenant of Grace than in creation, or in Providence—in fact, creation and Providence are but the temporary scaffold of the great house which God is building, even the God who inhabits the praises of Israel! The Lord cannot break His Word, nor forego His designs, nor forget His promises. Do not even think it! The crown jewels of God are staked and pawned upon the carrying out of the Covenant of Grace!

Furthermore, it is not possible for God to break a Covenant. When you and I stand and tremble before a Divine promise for fear it should not be fulfilled, we cast a slur upon the truth, faithfulness and Immutability of God. Has He ever changed? Has He ever been false? Has He ever lifted His hand and sworn by Himself, because He could swear by no greater and by two Immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie—has He given us strong consolation and yet has He failed us? Far from it! Brothers and Sisters, there has been nothing in the past to cast suspicion upon the veracity of Jehovah! Therefore, should we doubt Him or distrust His Covenant?

My text gives us an instance of a great strain that was put upon the Covenant. These people whom God had chosen to be His heritage constantly provoked Him! I cannot imagine a greater extent of sin than that which is pictured in this 106th Psalm. The chosen seed were degraded below other nations—they had forsaken their own God to go after alien deities. Was it ever known in any other case that a nation changed her gods? Yet Israel departed from the one living and true God willfully and wantonly, times without number! And God, instead of breaking His Covenant because of their treachery, had pity upon them! When He found them in the throes of their grief as the result of their sin, He turned His eyes upon His Covenant and, because of that Covenant, He delivered them!

From which I gather that the Covenant purpose of God to save His own people shall stand fast, come what may. “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” They that trust in the Lord, notwithstanding all the enormous weight of their sin, shall find Him faithful to His Word of pardon. He will keep His Word to sinners who put their trust in Him—and they shall be saved. Oh, glorious fact, the Covenant still exists!

II. But, secondly, THIS COVENANT IS TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN BY US. The children of Israel had quite forgotten the Covenant of their God. Elijah said, “They have forsaken Your Covenant.” Starting aside like a deceitful bow which fails the archer in the day of battle, they had been false to their God and useless for those great purposes for which He had chosen and ordained them. Have we not failed in the same manner?

Are not God’s people at this day chargeable with forgetting the Covenant by their unspiritual carelessness? Have you thought of yourself, my Brothers and Sisters, as covenanted ones, as ones with whom God has entered into solemn compact, saying, “I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward: I am God Almighty: walk before Me, and be you perfect”? Have you realized your position as in covenant with God? When you have been staggered with its wonderful condescension and blessedness, as I have often been, have you not soon forgotten your great obligation and thought only of earthly things? Have you not doubted your God because you have forgotten His Covenant? When Heaven and earth were rejoicing, Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.” Under such a slanderous charge, the Lord is gladly to speak with plaintive earnestness and ask, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.” Let it be realized by us and not passed over in a wicked carelessness, that as many as believe in Christ Jesus are in covenant with God and He has promised not to turn away from doing them good.

This cannot be better described than as a marriage covenant, even as it is written in the Book of the Prophet Hosea—“And I will betroth you unto Me forever; yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness: and you shall know the Lord.” O my Brother and Sister Believers, as the man puts the ring on the woman’s finger and the words are said, and she is his, and he is hers, so has God, by giving you faith, put the ring on your finger once and for all—and you are His and He is yours— and He says to you, today, “You shall not be for another; so will I also be for you.” Our response should be—“Other lords have had dominion over us, but now we are the Lord’s alone.” Oh, you covenanted ones, angels look at you with wonder! They regard you as the favorites of Heaven and yet you forget this and live as if there were no Covenant between God and you.

Sometimes, too—and in the case of Israel it was so—we get away from that Covenant by wanton sin, or by negligent omission of most delightful duties. I need not go into the story of Israel, again. You see in this Psalm how they transgressed. They took no notice of the Covenant they had made with God, but violated all His precepts. May I ask whether we have not been guilty of this same sin? May not each man bury his face in his hands as he confesses, “My God, You know how often I have acted as if I were not in covenant with You. I have lived as if I were my own master instead of yielding myself wholly to Your service. I have sometimes acted as a man of the world would have done, and not as one that belonged to Christ”? Be ashamed and be confounded for all this! And then wonder and admire that Covenant still stands and the Lord has not recalled his gracious promises. He says, “Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant.” This ought to yield in our hearts a harvest of repentance. It should bind us to God with intense affection that should tend towards perpetual sanctification from this day and onward!

These people had forgotten their God for another reason, namely, in the depth of their sorrow. A great sorrow stuns men and makes them forget the best sources of consolation. A little blow will cause great pain, but I have frequently heard, in reports of assaults, that far more serious blows have occasioned no pain, whatever, because they have destroyed consciousness. So do extreme distresses rob men of their wits and cause them to forget the means of relief. Under the chastening rod, the smart is remembered and the healing promise is forgotten! The people of Israel, when they were under the afflicting visitations of God, failed to remember His Covenant from the crushing effect of their sorrow and despair. Is it so with any of us? I may be addressing at this moment an ear which has grown dull through grief, a heart that is forgetful because of heaviness. Do not men even forget to eat bread in the hour of dire calamity? Ah, my Brother! Your affliction seems more present to you than even God, Himself! The black sorrow that lowers over you eclipses all the lamps of Heaven and earth!

May I be my Master’s messenger to you, to remind you that He is still in covenant with you and though He causes grief, yet will He have compassion? He has said, “All things work together for good to them that love God,” and He will keep His Word. He has also said, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” Depend upon it, He will preserve you! “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Remember, “He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,” but in love He corrects and chastens. Therefore, brush those tears away, anoint your head, wash your face and be of good courage, for the Lord will strengthen your heart—

*“What cheering words are these!  
Their sweetness who can tell?  
In time and to eternal days,  
‘Tis with the righteous well.”*

Oh that you could learn to sing in the dark like the nightingale and praise God out of the midst of the furnace like the three holy children! Oh that you may cry with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!” This is what you should do and it may help you to do it if you will remember the Covenant which God has not forgotten.

O Soul, why do you forget the Covenant? Fall back upon it and sing with Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!” According to the Covenant, God is to be everything to you. The Covenant does not stipulate that you shall not lose your friends, nor does it promise that you shall not lose your property, nor that you shall have no sickness—the Covenant is that God will be everything to you. Take care that you use Him as such. “These things have I spoken unto you,” said our Lord, “that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” If you have received the tribulation, be not satisfied till you have enjoyed the peace in Jesus which is equally promised! Alas, God’s people forget this Covenant! We have said enough upon this.

III. Though we forget the Covenant, yet GOD REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT—“For their sake He remembered His Covenant.” What does this word mean? Beloved, of course the Covenant is always on the mind of God, for the infinitely wise God cannot forget anything. But the text means that He stands to His Covenant—He remembers it so as to cause it to abide. Even though these people had so grievously provoked Him, He remembers His Covenant so as to find in it a reason for pardoning their sin and dealing with them in a way of mercy. He meets the flood of their sins with the flood of His faithfulness—“Nevertheless for their sake He remembered His Covenant.” He remembers it practically, that is, He puts it into effect and, in this case, He did so by repenting “according to the multitude of His mercies.” He had formerly smitten them, but now He puts the rod away. He made His people to be pitied of all them that carried them away captive. He came to their relief and succor. And this is just what God will do with you, my afflicted Friend, if you turn to Him with cries and tears and a humble, penitent faith! He will remember, for your sake, His Covenant by acting in a covenant way towards you, according to that word in the Book of Zechariah, “As for you, also, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.”

O Friend, God must remember His Covenant, for He can never forget what the making of that Covenant has cost Him. It cost Him nothing to make the heavens and the earth—He spoke and it was done. It costs him nothing to rule the nations—in the serenity of His Omnipotence, the Lord sits upon the floods—the Lord sits King forever. But to make the Covenant with man and to carry it out, cost Him His innermost Self! It cost Him His Only-Begotten—the eternal Son, the Well-Beloved, must die the death of the Cross—so that the Covenant may be established! Covenant-making was no trifle with God. I have heard people speak sneeringly of the Covenant. Indeed, no one of note preaches upon it, now, but yet it is the grandest of themes. It is a wondrous fact Godward, for it cost Him His dear Son’s heart’s blood. “It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief,” that this Covenant might be fulfilled and eternally settled!

See how readily God turns to this Covenant. You can be sure that He delights in it, for no sooner do His children cry than He, at once, remembers for their sakes, His Covenant. It was only a cry forced from them by misery, but instead of upbraiding them for the past and shutting out their cry, He straightway remembered His Covenant! When a man is easily reminded of a thing, it shows that it is agreeable to him to think of it. We are sure that God’s heart is much wrapped up in the Covenant of Grace since the feeble cries of His children remind Him of it.

I think, however, the reason why God remembers His Covenant most of all is because He remembers with whom He made it. A certain man had lived abroad for a while and there he found a friend with whom, for years, he enjoyed delightful fellowship. In due time he returned to England, to carry on a business, but he never forgot his friend. He had promised and entered into brotherly covenant, that he would help his friend’s family and so, in due season, he received into his employment the young son of his old friend. And he was minded to instruct him and help him, and promote his interests. He had given his friend his right hand and said, “Trust your boy with me. I will see him through.” The youth came to London and entered the service of his father’s friend, with every prospect bright before him. But, alas, the boy proved unworthy. He fell into all sorts of vices and follies and grieved his friend—his father’s friend. His employer said, “I shall be glad to get rid of this fellow for he is a burden to me. I cannot advance him for he is unworthy of my favor.” Look how loath he is to deal severely with the boy, for his father’s sake! He calls him into his private office and pleads and reasons with him. He says, “I have borne more with you than with anyone else in my establishment. Remember, it is for your father’s sake. Had it not been for my promise to your father, I would have dismissed you long ago.” One day he cries, “I really must dismiss him! He must go.” But he thinks of the father and of their days of fond familiarity with each other and he cannot bear to deal harshly with the son of such a man and, therefore, he says, “I will try him again; I will still bear with him, for my promise’s sake, which I made to his father.”

Now I am sure it was so with God and the seed of Abraham. These people had revolted and rebelled continually, but the Lord remembered Abraham, His friend. A memory rose before the Divine mind of the faithful man lifting the knife to slay his only son, Isaac, in obedience to the Most High. As the Lord saw that act of believing obedience, He seemed to say, “I will still have pity on his offspring—they are the most undeserving and provoking people that ever breathed, but I have entered into a Covenant with Abraham, My friend, and therefore I will have pity upon them.” The fact is, with regard to the great God and you and me, that He would often say, “I must destroy them.” But then He thinks of His dear Son upon the Cross. He hears ringing through the midnight of that great day of sorrow, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” And the great heart of God is moved to pity us because of the death of His Son. There is merit enough in Jesus to remove all the demerit of our sins!

The great God was not thinking of a dead man when He thought of Abraham. Our Savior tells us, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Abraham is with God and God looked at Abraham, His living friend, and restrained His indignation when Abraham’s children provoked Him. Jesus also lives! He has gone up on high; He sits at the right hand of God and when the Lord has looked at us and grown weary of our sins, He turns His eyes upon the perfections of His dear Son and He is well pleased, for His righteousness’ sake, for He has magnified the Law and made it honorable. Thus the Lord turns back to the Covenant made with Jesus—He hears our cries and remembers, for our sake, His Covenant. Oh, the Grace of this! Because of Him with whom the Covenant of Grace is made, who is forever the Father’s delight and the joy of His soul, the Father has compassion on us! Does it not make you pray, “Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your Anointed”? Or, to quote our hymn, do we not say—

*“Him and then the sinner see,  
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me?”*  
The Person of the Lord Jesus is the Substance and Seal of the Covenant of Grace and God remembers it because He remembers Him!

IV. I will finish with this last point, which I am sure you will feel to be of the utmost importance. If God remembers, for our sake, His Covenant, LET US REMEMBER IT. You that are the Lord’s covenanted ones, think of the sacred promise and begin to enjoy it and live upon it practically. What is the Covenant? Here is one form of it—“I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be you perfect.” That is an early and condensed shape of it, that is to say, the Lord God Almighty gives Himself up to be our portion and we are to yield ourselves to Him, to walk before Him in perfect obedience. This also is the Covenant—“I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Come, Beloved, make God your God. This means—make God your everything! Say not, “I am poor.” Not so, for God is yours and so all things are yours! Say not, “I am weak.” Not so, God Almighty is yours—when you are weak, then you are strong. “But I have no wisdom.” Is not the Lord Jesus made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification? He that has God has everything!

Will you belittle your God and limit the Holy One of Israel? Come, find your all in God! This is your part of the covenant, to accept God as being to you what He says He is. He has made Himself to be your All in All— accept Him as such. Did not David say, “He is all my salvation, and all my desire”? This is the portion and heritage of the children of God. “Cursed be the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm; but blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.” Cast yourself upon the Covenant and find rest in it. Sing in your heart of hearts—

*“He that has made my Heaven secure  
Will here all good provide,  
Since Christ is rich, can I be poor?  
What can I need beside?”*

“The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters.” Oh, the blessed result of standing to the Covenant and letting God be our All in All!

In this Covenant it is incumbent that we rest alone in our God. You have not taken God to be your God if you cannot be content with Him, alone. Abraham forsook everything for God. He went to a country he had never seen, followed a path that had never been mapped out and God said to him, “Fear not, Abram: I am your shield.” He was in the midst of enemies who would have destroyed him but for the mysterious protection which surrounded him like a shield. The Lord’s word had gone forth, “Touch not My anointed and do My Prophets no harm.” Abraham had no shield but his God and yet no man in the world dwelt in greater safety! God said to him, “I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward”— and so He was! Abraham once lamented that he had no seed and that the steward of his house was his only heir. But the Lord who had promised him a seed yet said to him,” I am your exceedingly great reward.” Not the

 seed, but his God must be his joy and crown! And Abraham felt it was so and, therefore, stood ready to surrender that seed if the Lord commanded.

That is what the Lord would have you do, Beloved. Look not to what is seen with the eyes. Listen not to what is heard with the ear. Live in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High—in the place where faith takes the place of sense. Endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Penetrate into the substance which is unseen and pass by the shadow which is all that sense can discern. Live on the living God and then you know the secret of the Covenant! Your soul shall dwell at ease and your seed shall inherit the earth! Your soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness and you shall praise the Lord with joyful lips!

Remember, lastly, in order to look well to this Covenant, you must give yourselves wholly up to God. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Live only to glorify God! Have no other aim or objective but your God. Brother, if God gives you much, glorify Him with it by your generous consecration. If He take it away, glorify Him by your patience under loss. Wherever you are, be always aiming to love your God with all your heart and with all your soul—and your neighbor as yourself and, verily, it shall be well with you and blessed shall you be—for God will remember, for your sake, His Covenant!

I wish that the unconverted here would desire to be a participant in this Covenant. If you do so, the very desire is the gift of Divine Grace! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you have entered into Covenant with God! He that has faith in the Lord Jesus is a child of the Father of the faithful and, therefore, he is a participant in the Covenant which God made with Abraham and his spiritual seed! O Lord of these poor stony hearts, raise up children unto Abraham, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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SIN—ITS SPRINGHEAD, STREAM AND SEA  
NO. 2204

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 10, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.”  
Psalm 106:7.**

OUR fathers! From them we derive our nature. We inherit our fathers’ propensities, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh. As is the nature, such is the conduct. Hence the Psalmist writes in verse 6, “We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.” If we must mention our fathers’ faults, it is not to screen ourselves, for we have to confess that our life’s story is no brighter than theirs. It is not because the fathers have eaten sour grapes that the children’s teeth are set on edge, for we, ourselves, have greedily devoured those evil clusters—“We have sinned with our fathers.” “As in water, face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.” When we read of the sins of others, we ought to be humbled and warned, for, “all we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way.” We have no space wherein to set up a monument to our own glory. As we cannot boast in our pedigree, for we are the children of sinners, so we cannot exalt ourselves because of our personal excellence, for there is none that does good, no not one. We come before God and confess our iniquities as a race and as individuals. And we cry unto Him, in the words of the 47th verse, “Save us, O Lord our God.”

It may help us to escape out of the meshes of our natural depravity if we look back and see the causes of our fathers’ sins. To confess our personal sin will tend to keep us humble and, in view of the Lord’s mercy, which has spared and pardoned us, a sense of our guilt will make us grateful. The less we think of ourselves, the more we shall think of Him whose “mercy endures forever.” And if we see where our fathers’ sins began and how they grew, and what they came to, we may hope that the Spirit of God will help us to turn from the beginnings of evil and forsake the fountainheads of our iniquities. This will tend to repentance and holiness. May we be so worked upon by the Spirit of God that we shall not be as our earthly fathers, but become like our heavenly Father, who says to us, “Be you followers of God, as dear children.” We are not to take our fathers after the flesh for our example wherein they have gone astray, but our Father who is in Heaven we are to imitate by the power of His Grace.

Great things, whether good or evil, begin with little things. The river that rolls its mighty volume to the sea was once a tiny brook. No, it started as a springhead, where the child stooped down to drink and, with a single drink, seemed as if he would exhaust the supply! The rivulet ripples itself into a river. Sin is a stream of this sort. It starts with a thought. It increases to a resolve, a word, an act. It gathers force and becomes habit and daring rebellion!

Follow me, therefore, first, when I notice, that lack of understanding lies at the fountainhead of sin—“Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt.” Out of this lack of understanding comes the greater offense of ungrateful forgetfulness. Failure of memory follows upon a lack of understanding—“They remembered not the multitude of Your mercies.” This readily leads on to the sad consummation of rebellion. Provocation follows upon forgetfulness. Inward faults display themselves in outward offenses— “They provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.”

I. Let us begin at the beginning. LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WONDERS IS THE SOURCE OF SIN. The wonders that God worked in Egypt were exceedingly great and instructive. The 10 plagues were memorable masterstrokes of God’s judgment upon the proud and notable displays of His favor to the oppressed. How Egypt staggered beneath the blows of Jehovah! Those tremendous judgments came one after another with righteous deliberation and yet with terrible rapidity! Pharaoh and his proud nobles were wounded and humbled—the leviathan of Egypt was broken in pieces as one that is slain. Surely they for whom all these plagues were worked ought to have considered them and ought to have spied out the plain lessons which they taught! But they failed to do so, for they were dull of understanding. Albeit, God had come out of His secret places and had made bare His arm for them, yet, “our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt.”

We see this to be the case when we read the story, for, at first, when God began to work for them, they were so taken up with the present that they complained of Moses, for the cruel retort of Pharaoh! He had gone in unto the proud monarch and had urged the demand of Jehovah—and the tyrant had replied, “You hinder the people from their works; get you unto your burdens.” He increased their toil by refusing to give the people straw to make bricks—and so their bondage was made bitter to the last degree— and they groaned as they saw “that they were in evil case.” They are not blamed for groaning, but it was very blameworthy that they should say to Moses and Aaron, “The Lord look upon you and judge; because you have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us.”

It was mean to blame their friends for the cruel fault of their enemy. How wretchedly have we also complained when God, in His gracious dealings with us, has caused us an inward grief! He began to show us our sin—a very necessary thing, but we kicked against it and said, “Is this the Grace of God? Oh, that we were rid of these convictions!” Thus the Lord took away our self-confidence, but we were full of unbelief and we thought some great evil had happened to us, whereas it was the way of God’s wisdom and love to make sin as much a bondage to us as Egypt was to Israel! How else would we feel our need of redemption and be willing to come forth free by the blood of the Lamb? If the Lord does but lay His little finger upon us, we complain! And, instead of seeing love in our affliction, we cry out as if the Lord dealt harshly with us. His mercy designs to teach us some great lesson for our eternal benefit, but we murmur and ask, “Is this the love of God to His chosen?”

Our fathers understood not His wonders in Egypt and, oftentimes, this is our case—we judge by the feelings of the present and forget the eternal future! We cannot understand our burdens and our soul-humbling. We stand bewildered and amazed. Though the point is plain enough to faith, unbelief does not hear the rod, nor Him that has appointed it—and we are taken up with our present smart. Our selfish desire for immediate comfort prevents our understanding the great plans of Divine Grace.

Further on we find Israel broken down by utter hopelessness. Moses spoke to them again, but we read, “They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” They had been so brutally crushed by the Egyptians that they had lost all heart. Slavery had killed all the manhood of their race—they were abject, timorous and crouching bondsmen. The last ounce that breaks the camel’s back was laid on them by Pharaoh—and they could no more listen to words of hope. Moses said he had come to deliver them. He told them they should be brought out with a high hand and an outstretched arm. But they could not think it possible—they shook their heads and turned a deaf ear to what they regarded as vain words. Hope had fled. They understood not that God could, by any possible means, deliver them from the gigantic power which held them down.

Alas, this also has been the case with us! And perhaps is the case with some here at this moment. You are so sad and so depressed that you cannot believe in salvation. Your presumptuous hopes lie dead in heaps round about you and you cannot believe that you will ever be saved. “Oh!” you say, “there may be mercy for someone else, but there is no mercy for me! God can forgive the chief of sinners, but He will never forgive

 me.” Though we tell you of Free Grace and dying love—and of pardon for sins of deepest dye, a pardon bought with Jesus’ blood—you turn a deaf ear to us because your spirit is wounded and faint. You understand not God’s wonders for and in you. You cannot think that, indeed, and of a truth, the Lord Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you. You dare not hope that He has ordained you unto eternal life, that He will put His Spirit within you! You cannot believe that He will give you power to become children of God and joint-heirs with Christ! Your very sorrow for sin has made you incapable of understanding God’s wonders of Divine Grace. This is a painful state of mind.

You see, dear Friends, these people, though they saw God’s plagues on the Egyptians, which were mercies to Israel, yet they did not enter into their teachings. One would have thought that every Israelite would have said, when the thick darkness was over all the land, even “darkness that might be felt,” “surely Jehovah is a great and mighty God!” When there was a storm of thunder and hail over all Egypt, the likes of which had never been known before, would it not have been natural for them to cry, “Who is like unto You, O Jehovah? We, Your people, bow before Your majesty!” The right-minded Israelite would have prostrated himself before the supreme power of God and would have never, henceforth, doubted the Lord’s ability to redeem His chosen nation.

Should not Israel have also learned the royal sovereignty of the Lord God? What armies obeyed the call of that great King! At His word the river brought forth frogs abundantly. He spoke and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their borders. “He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.” Jehovah’s camp is very great. The waters were turned into blood and the dust into creeping things—the heavens were set on fire—and the habitations of men were darkened.

He who did all these marvelous things is King over all the earth. “He smote all the first-born in Egypt, the chief of their strength.” Even the first-born of Pharaoh, that sits on the throne, was made to die. Surely Jehovah is King of Kings! Would you not have thought that His people would have felt the force of His Divine dominion and would have bowed before His supreme will throughout the rest of their lives? Awed by His power and Glory, we might have expected to find in Israel a loyal people! But no, they neither seemed to tremble before the power, nor to bow before the sovereignty of Jehovah. They murmured against Him and declared that He could not deliver them—and complained that they had been brought out of Egypt to die by the hand of Pharaoh at the Red Sea!

Beyond all question, they ought to have recognized Jehovah’s love to them. By so much as the plagues were terrible to Egypt they were gracious to His people! Though the Israelites were a race of down-trodden slaves, the Lord loved them. He moved Heaven and earth to liberate them! He not only made the very dust of Egypt alive for them, but He sent swift angels out of Heaven to avenge the wrongs of His chosen. The orbs of Heaven and the creatures of earth—all were brought to bear upon God’s great purpose of Grace towards Israel. Truly said the Lord, “I gave Egypt for Your ransom: Ethiopia and Seba for You.” It was love, wondrous love to Israel, which made the Lord to show His signs in Egypt, His wonders in the land of Ham! Why did they not become lovingly obedient in return for such favors? Why were they hard of heart, stiff of neck and unwilling to be led of the Lord their God? Alas, they understood not what the Lord was doing for them!

To you, Beloved, it may be that the same fault can be laid. God has done great wonders for Believers, but, it may be, we have not yet learned His power so as to trust His might nor His sovereignty, so as to submit to His will nor His love, so as to rejoice in His faithfulness. Alas, we have but little understanding! No, worse, we have none at all except as the Lord, the Holy Spirit, teaches us to profit and instructs us, as children are instructed.

The tribes of Israel did not see in all this, the claim which the Lord had upon them. As a people, they belonged to Him who had made them a nation. Because of what He had done for them, the Lord took up a peculiar position to them which He would have them acknowledge. Remember how, in the 20th chapter of Exodus, before the Lord proclaims His Ten Commandments, He says—“I am the Lord your God, which have brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”? By this, Jehovah separated them to be His people and He declared Himself to be their God. During the plagues, He marked His special love to His own, for when the Lord sent a thick darkness over all the land, we read, “But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

When the cattle of Egypt died, Pharaoh sent and found, upon inquiry, that “there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead.” When the firstborn of Egypt fell dead beneath the angel’s sword, the sprinkled blood of the Passover lamb secured to all Israel protection from the midnight slaughter—and men were made to know that God did put a difference between His chosen and the men of Egypt! Yet, the favored people did not understand it—the Truth of God was conspicuous enough, but they did not perceive it as they ought to have done. Neither did they practically show that they were the Lord’s people and that only He was their God. The same slowness to take up our true position, we may see and mourn in ourselves. After all the Lord’s wonders of Grace towards us, we do not exalt Him as our God, nor serve Him as His people, as we ought to do. Lord, have mercy upon us!

The people did not see that their God, by all His wonders, was pledging Himself to them. After having done so much for them, He would not leave them. Could He have brought them out of Egypt to kill them at the Red Sea? They even dared to say that this was their suspicion! Oh, the slanders of unbelief! But if they had understood His wonders, they would have seen that He who had done such great things for them had bound Himself to perfect His purpose and to bring them into the land which He had promised to their fathers. “Ah,” you say, “they were very stupid.” I do not defend them—but what about yourselves? Have we not been mistrustful? Have we not said in our hearts, “He will yet fail us, and our faith will be disappointed”? Alas, great God, we blush and are ashamed! But, listen—

*“Determined to save, He watched o’er my path When, Satan’s blind slave, I sported with death. And can He have taught me to trust in His name, And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”*

Will the Lord lose all that He has worked in us and for us? Is He like the foolish one who began to build and was not able to finish? Does the Eternal revoke His resolves? Does the Almighty turn from His purposes? Is it not said, “The Strength of Israel will not lie; for He is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man, that He should repent”? O Believer, learn this lesson well and trust in your unchanging God! And thus shall you understand His wonders in Egypt.

The fact is, dear Friends, these people had no deeply spiritual work upon their hearts. “They understood not His wonders in Egypt” because their hearts were hardened by their association with a proud, worldly, idolatrous and yet cultured nation—and they had turned aside from the spiritual faith of their fathers. Wonders were worked and they saw them, and were amazed, but they did not see beneath the surface, nor perceive the Lord’s meaning in them. Beloved, I pray to God for you who are newly called out from the world, that the first working of Divine Grace in your souls may be deep, true, clear and lasting. I would have you not only know, but understand. Depend upon it, a man’s later character is very much shaped by the mode of his conversion.

Why do some turn back altogether? It is because their change of heart was not that thorough radical conversion which involves the creation of a new nature! They felt certain superficial impressions which they mistook for the new birth and they made a hasty profession which they could not, afterwards, maintain. They were not thoroughly saved from the dominion of sin, or they would have held on to the end. Many professing Christians of whom we have a good hope that they will prove to be sincere, never had any deep conviction of sin, nor any overwhelming sense of their need of Jesus. Therefore they have seen little of our Lord in His glorious offices and all-sufficient Sacrifice—and have gained no thorough understanding of His Truth. They are like slovenly farmers who have plowed their fields after a fashion, but they have not gone deep—and the land will never yield more than half a crop!

We have all around us too much surface work. Numbers of conversions are true as far as they go, but they go a very little way. I am afraid for you if you have only a flimsy experience, a skin-deep conviction, a blind man’s apprehension of the heavenly Light of God. No wonder if very soon you forgot and afterwards rebel! Let us pray God that both in ourselves and in those whom we bring to Christ, the work of Grace may be deep and thorough—and may our faith in Jesus be sustained by a clear understanding of the Gospel and of our Lord’s dealings with us! The Truth of God, itself, and our experience of it, may be likened to food—it is not the food we swallow which benefits us, but that which we digest! If undigested food lies in our inward parts and unassimilated, it will brood disease rather than promote health. So Truth which is not understood and thus taken up into the soul, cannot “feed” us in the true spiritual sense of that word.

You see, Brothers and Sisters, there was a flaw in the Israelites at the beginning—“They understood not Your wonders in Egypt.” When an iron girder suddenly snaps, they tell us that there was a flaw in the original casting. It was quite imperceptible at the first and, therefore, the girder passed all the tests of the engineer—and it was not until years of wear and tear that it gave way. Here was a manifest flaw in the casting as to the people of Israel—“They understood not Your wonders in Egypt.” Had they well understood the Truth at the very first, they

 would not and could not have forgotten it—and they would not have been so little influenced by it in their conduct towards God.

So much upon the first point. We have had before us a subject which should produce great thought and devout anxiety.  
II. FAILURE OF MEMORY FOLLOWS UPON LACK OF UNDERSTANDING. Children forget what they learn unless they understand it. They may pass the School Board standards and yet, in a few years, they may know very little. The capacity for forgetting in some children is amazing. Many, even among grownups, have splendid memories for forgetting! Alas, it is the case with certain of the Lord’s people. That which we do not understand we readily forget. When a child thoroughly understands his lesson, it will be fixed in his memory, but if he has merely learned the words and has not entered into their senses, do you wonder that his lesson slips away? So was it with Israel in Egypt and at the Red Sea. Those sentences follow each other in true logical order—“They understood not Your wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies.”  
Mercies should be remembered. It is a great wrong to God when we bury His mercies in the grave of unthankfulness. Especially is this the case with distinguishing mercies, wherein the Lord makes us to differ from others. Light, when the rest of the land is in darkness! Life, when others are smitten with the sword of death! Liberty from an iron bondage! O Christians, these are not things to be forgotten! Abundantly utter the memory of distinguishing mercies! Discriminating Grace deserves unceasing memorials of praise!  
Mercies multiplied should never be forgotten. If they are new every morning, our memory of them should be always fresh. Read the story of the 10 plagues and see how the Lord heaped up His mercies upon Israel with both His hands. Even if they had forgotten one wonder, they ought to have remembered others! “Forgot not all His benefits.” Alas, some men, though their memories are refreshed with renewed loving kindnesses, yet prove by their discontent and mistrust that they do not remember the Lord’s goodness. A grievous thing is this, when God sends mercy, and mercy, and mercy, and mercy, and mercy, and mercy—heaps of mercies, loads of mercies, hills of mercies, mountains of mercies, worlds of mercies—and yet men forget! His mercies are more than the stars, more than the drops of dew, more than the sands on the seashore and yet we do not remember! This is a mournful and inexcusable fault!  
“They remembered not the multitude of Your mercies.” That is to say, they did not permanently remember these blessings. They remembered the Lord’s wonders a little and then they sang—but when the song was over, their memories failed. They remembered God’s mercies while they marched for the first few days as free men who had no daily task of brickmaking to fulfill—but when they found that Pharaoh pursued them, they forgot all the Lord’s mighty acts! When they tasted the waters of Marah and found them bitter, “they murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” They forgot God’s wonders whenever they were in straits. They limited The Holy One of Israel by their unbelief! “They soon forget His works; they waited not for His counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness and tempted God in the desert.” Our remembrance of the Lord’s wonders of love should abide with us all our days. May the Lord give us a permanent recollection of His great goodness, both in Providence and in Grace!  
Hutton, Bishop of Durham, was, one day riding over the bleak northern hills. He stopped and, giving his horse to his servant, he went aside from the road to kneel down on a certain spot. He always did so when he reached that place, for in the day of his wealth and honor, he had not forgotten that when he was a poor boy he had crossed those wild hills, without shoes and stockings, and had turned a cow out of her place that he might warm his feet with what little heat remained in the place where the creature had lain. He had become bishop of a rich see and a man of renown, but he never passed that spot without kneeling down and praising God. May we have faithful memories for the goodness of our faithful God! The Israelites had memories out of which the mercies of God soon faded. The Lord save us from being like they and cause us to bless His name for what He did for us 50 years ago! Some of us would not have been among His people, today, if it had not been for the Lord’s favors in our early youth—therefore let us praise Him for old mercies as well as for new ones.  
But Israel did not remember God’s mercies powerfully. If they remembered these things, yet the remembrance did not enable them to bear up under present discouragements. The Egyptians pursued them and when they heard the cracking of the whips and the neighing of the horses, they cried out unto the Lord—they whined out—“It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness!” Had they forgotten Jehovah, who had glorified Himself over Egypt and had crippled all her power? Their memory of Jehovah’s wonders had not influence enough over them to keep up their courage! Oh, for such a powerful memory of God’s mercies that we may never distrust Him!  
They did not remember practically. Their lives were not affected thereby. True gratitude shows itself in acts and deeds. A gentleman had been the means of making a position for a tradesman, but, by a misfortune, he came to be, himself, in need of immediate help to tide over a season of great pressure. He called at the house of the person he had so successfully helped and found the wife at home. He told her the case and she answered at once, “My husband will be ready to lend you his name to the full amount required. He will hasten to you the moment you need him, and be glad to do so.” A prudent neighbor, afterwards, said, “But you may have to pay away all you have in the world.” “Yes,” said the grateful wife, “we do not mind that—he was the making of us and if we have to lose everything for his sake, we shall do it very cheerfully—for we shall only be back to where we were when he first helped us.”  
That is a form of gratitude which is rare enough in this world, though I have seen it here and there. Beloved, if the Lord were to take away all that we have, we should only be back where we were at the beginning! We have nothing but what we have received from Him! He takes nothing from us but what He first gave us—let us bless a taking as well as a giving God. Oh, for this practical gratitude towards the Lord, that we may in all things either do His will cheerfully, or suffer it patiently! If we remember the multitude of His mercies practically, we shall be ready to surrender honor, ease, health, estate, yes, life, itself, for Him who gave Himself for us! Oh, to remember God’s mercies practically in everyday life, in thought and word and deed!  
In fact, the Lord’s mercies ought to be remembered progressively. We should think more and more of His exceeding kindness. A Christian man’s life should be like another Bible, another Book of Chronicles. When we come to read through our personal life story, we should say, “Neither the 9th chapter of Nehemiah, nor the 106th Psalm can exceed my experience. The Lord has dealt well with His servant, according to His Word. If some of us had opportunity to write our lives in full—which we could hardly venture to do because there are private passages between our souls and our God which no human eye may read—how fully could we now testify to the faithful love of our Covenant God! On our parts, sin and weakness and fickleness have been conspicuous in our career. But on the Lord’s part, Grace and Truth, and faithfulness and love shine forth as the sun! Beloved, we must not let go of the memory of the Lord’s matchless kindness, but we must remember it more and more! The older we are, the more must we trust in Him who has not suffered one of His promises to fail!  
III. I need a little time for the third head, which is this—GRIEVOUS PROVOCATION FOLLOWED THEIR FORGETFULNESS OF GOD. Lack of understanding begat forgetfulness and forgetfulness brought forth rebellion. Let me read the last part of the text—“They provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.” Why does the Psalmist dwell upon the place and say, “at the sea, even at the Red Sea”? Why was it worse to provoke the Lord there than elsewhere? It evidently was so, for the Inspired Scripture mentions the spot twice to put an emphasis upon it. Why was this?  
The offense, itself, was grievous anywhere. They doubted God when they heard that Pharaoh pursued them and they said, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have You taken us away to die in the wilderness?” This imputation of cruelty to their faithful God provoked His sacred heart. The Lord is full of pity and His name is Love and, therefore, He is not easily provoked. But He declares that He was provoked by this display of their mistrust. They provoked Him—they called Him forth, as it were, to battle! They vexed Him and stirred Him up to contend with them. O Brothers and Sisters, after so much love as God has shown us, we must not fall to provoking Him! Let us far rather spend our lives in extolling Him! To provoke Him at any time is a wanton wickedness—unjust, ungenerous, diabolical. It is no common sin which thus provokes the longsuffering Lord. Many a sin God has endured patiently, but in this case He is provoked to anger! This is an offense which touches the apple of His eye and causes His jealousy to burn like coals of fire. O children of God, how can you provoke your Father to wrath? The Lord have mercy upon us! We must bow low at His feet with sorrowful repentance. Let us shun this fault in the future.  
But why did their transgression at the sea so greatly anger the Lord? Was it because it came at the outset of their existence as a nation? They had not gone many days’ journey out of Egypt before they rebelled. They had not yet eaten up the bread they carried in their kneading troughs and they had scarcely met their first difficulty—and yet they hastened to provoke their God! How could they rebel so soon? They had scarcely reached the Red Sea before they began provoking the Lord with their dishonorable suspicions. O young Christian, if you provoke the Lord as soon as you are converted, your conduct will be black, indeed! Only a day or two ago you sang His praises and shouted, “Hallelujah! The blood of the Lamb has saved me.” Will you so speedily distrust the Lord and provoke Him “at the sea, even at the Red Sea”? What? Stumble in the first few steps? God grant it may not be so!

If you feel that you have already thus provoked the Lord, confess the wrong and ask pardon through the precious blood. To begin to doubt almost as soon as you begin to believe is a wretched business. What? Have you come out of Egypt and have you brought its bondage with you? You have been saved by the sprinkled blood and you have fed upon the Paschal lamb—and can you so soon utter words dishonoring to your delivering Lord? To doubt in the presence of a mercy is to doubt, indeed! To doubt the power of the blood of Christ when you have newly been saved, to doubt the power of the Holy Spirit to keep you to the end when you have just been renewed—why, this is aggravated guilt! It is sadly common, but it is none the less grievous to the heart of God. He marks it down and there stands the record—“They provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.” This is a poor beginning of a march to Canaan.  
Now this Red Sea was the place of their consecration. Here they were “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Here it was that they said, “He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” As they stood by that Red Sea which had swallowed up all their enemies, they sang the praises of God and proposed to do great things in His honor! What wonderful obedience they meant to render! And yet they provoked Him then and there! What? Will you come up from the waters of your Baptism and go home and provoke God by unholy conversation and ungovernable temper? Can any of you go from the Communion Table into sin? I heard of one who went from the Table of the Lord across the street into the public-house. This is too gross! Such conduct grieves holy men and much more, the Holy God. To go from prayer to robbery, from reading the Word to fellowship with ungodly men—this must be terribly provoking to the thrice holy Jehovah! It is as though it were written again, “They provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.”  
It is a high crime and misdemeanor to sin in the presence of a great mercy. There is the sea. They have just marched through it and they have reached Marah, where the waters are brackish. If they now distrust and complain, close on the heels of their great deliverance, it will be a crime, indeed! O men, what are you doing? There is the Red Sea which God divided and yet you think He cannot give you water to drink! O fools and slow of heart, thus to doubt the Almighty! Doubt in the presence of a mercy! Doubt while so great a favor is before your eyes! This is evil, indeed! I find the Hebrew has been read by some, “They provoked Him in the sea, even in the Red Sea”—while they were passing through the deep they were rebelling! You will hardly believe it! What? When the waters stood upright as in an heap and were a wall on either side of them—and they walked through the depths of the sea and found good footing where sea monsters once had whelped and stabled—were they then provoking Him? Yes, they carried their sinful hearts with them even into the heart of the sea!  
O Beloved, do not bear hard upon these Israelites, bear hard upon yourselves and hate the sin which dares intrude within the sacred enclosures of your joy in the Cross and dares to tempt you even when the five wounds of Jesus are shining on your soul like stars of God! Hate the sins which follow you to the Table of the Lord! Hate the wandering mind which taints the sacred bread and wine and defiles you when the instructive symbols are yet in your mouths! Abhor the sin which dogs your heels and follows you even to your knees—and hinders you in drawing near to God in prayer. Oh, the accursed sin which even on Tabor’s top makes us fall asleep or talk foolishly! Lord, have mercy upon us and forgive the sins of our holy places and let it not stand against us in your Book that, “They provoked You at the sea, even at the Red Sea.” It was called the Sea of Weeds and truly many were the weeds which grew, not only in the water, but in the hearts of those who stood on its shore!  
I must give one or two touches to complete the picture. This provocation of God was all the worse because they had only just done singing. What a song it was! Handel, with all the majesty of his half-Inspired music, can hardly set forth that wondrous song of Israel at the sea. “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” That was a noble anthem, but murmuring was a miserable sequel to it. “The Lord shall reign forever and ever,” was a glorious hallelujah, but before its echoes had ceased to stir the heart of the lone hills, the same tongues were heard to complain against the Lord! “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation,” died away into mutterings of unbelief!  
Do you wonder that God was provoked? Have you ever acted so? Did you ever rise high in rapture and praise the Lord upon the high-sounding cymbals—and then find yourself groveling on the ground within an hour? Have you felt so jubilant that you could have snatched Gabriel’s silver trumpet from his mouth that you might blow it with all your might? And have you before long been looking for a mouse hole in which to hide your miserable head by reason of your unbelief? What fools we are! “Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.” When we know most, we are ignorant. When we swell to our greatest, we are big nothings! When God makes much of us, we think least of ourselves. How greatly do we prize and praise the precious blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin!  
This evil happened near the time of their strong faith. You remember how they sang, “Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling, shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Your people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which You have purchased. You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O lord, which You have made for You to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.” They felt quite sure of conquering the land and chasing out the foe. They were so strong in faith that they thought they should never again mistrust the Lord, whose right hand was so glorious in power! The exultant women who followed Miriam never suspected that they could doubt the Lord, whose right hand had dashed the enemy in pieces.  
One of them would probably have said, “As for our enemies, the depths have covered them, there is not one of them left. I shall never fear again. I have attained full assurance and perfection and I shall never again mistrust the Lord.” Yet these were the people who speedily murmured for lack of bread until the Lord heard them and was grieved! I dare say the men of the Red Sea said, each one, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved”—and yet in how brief an hour were they challenging the faithfulness of Jehovah—and questioning His power to give them bread in the wilderness! Lord, what is man? We distrust Providence, we suspect Grace and we question the Lord, Himself—and all this after the Lord had made our assurance doubly sure! We are sad creatures and yet the Lord does not cast us away, for it is written, “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known.”  
Two things more and I have done. Admire the patient faithfulness of our God. Jehovah, though provoked, still loves His people. Admire His love to ourselves and especially that He should entertain such constancy of affection towards such wayward, fickle, unreliable souls as we are!  
Next, believe God so as to cease to grieve Him. Do not start aside at the next little puddle you see in the road—it is not an ocean. Do not whine that you will be devoured the next time you see a cat in the garden— after all, it is not a lion. Do not groan, “I cannot pass this dread abyss,” for it is only a little ditch which you can leap by faith. God helping you, rest not till you become “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Doubt God when He gives you cause to do so, but not till then! If God had left those Israelites, once, they might have had some excuse for distrusting Him, but He had never done so. If He had ever failed in His judgments, they might have had some excuse for unbelief, but when He threatened their enemies with plagues, those plagues never failed to come! Was there a single weak point in what God had done for them? They had no ground, whatever, for their unbelief!  
O Brothers and Sisters, let us never distrust our God until He gives us ground for doing so—and that will never be! O Blessed Holy Spirit, strengthen the faith of Your people this day, and may that faith create in us perfect obedience to the will of the Lord, so that henceforth we may magnify His holy name and walk with Him until we see His face unveiled above! The Lord sanctify us unto Himself, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 106.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—914, 688, 106. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #115 New Park Street Pulpit 1

WHY ARE MEN SAVED?

NO. 115

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 1, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake.” Psalm 106:8.**

IN looking upon the works of God in Creation, there are two questions which at once occur to the thoughtful mind and which must be answered before we can procure a clue to the philosophy and science of Creation itself. The first one is the question of authorship—Who made all these things? And the next question is that of design—For what purpose were all these things created? The first question, “Who made all these things?” is one which is easily answered by a man who has an honest conscience and a sane mind, for when he lifts his eyes up yonder to read the stars, he will see those stars spell out in golden letters this word—GOD. And when he looks below upon the waves, if his ears are honestly opened, he will hear each wave proclaiming,

 GOD. If he looks to the summits of the mountains, they will not speak, but with a dignified answer of silence they seem to say—

*“The hand that made us is Divine.”*  
If we listen to the rippling of the stream at the mountainside, to the tumbling of the avalanche, to the lowing of the cattle, to the singing of the birds, to every voice and sound of Nature, we shall hear this answer to the question, “God is our Maker. He has made us and not we, ourselves.”

The next question, as to design—Why were these things made?—is not as easy to answer, apart from Scripture. But when we look at Scripture, we discover this fact—that as the answer to the first question is God, so the answer to the second question is the same! Why were these things made? The answer is, for God’s Glory, for His honor and for His pleasure. No other answer can be consistent with reason. Whatever other replies men may propound, no other can be really sound. If they will, for one moment, consider that there was a time when God had no creatures— when He dwelt alone, the mighty Maker of ages, glorious in an uncreated solitude, Divine in His eternal loneliness—“I Am and there is none beside Me”—can anyone answer this question—Why did God make creatures to exist?—in any other way than by answering it thus—“He made them for His own pleasure and for His own Glory.” You may say He made them for His creatures. But we answer, there were, then, no creatures to make them for! We admit that the answer may be a sound one now. God makes the harvest for His creatures. He hangs the sun in the firmament to bless His creatures with light and sunshine. He bids the moon walk in her course by night to cheer the darkness of His creatures upon earth. But the first answer, going back to the origin of all things, can be nothing else than this—“For His pleasure they are and were erected.” “He made all things for Himself and by Himself.”

Now, this which holds good in the works of Creation, holds equally good in the works of salvation. Lift up your eyes on high—higher than those stars which glimmer on the floor of Heaven! Look up where spirits in white—clearer than light—reflect yon stars in their magnificence! Look there, where the redeemed with their choral symphonies “circle the Throne of God rejoicing” and ask this question—“Who saved those glorified beings and for what purpose where they saved?” We tell you that the same answer must be given as we have previously given to the former question—“He saved them—He saved them for His name’s sake!” The text is an answer to the two great questions concerning salvation—Who saved men and why are they saved? “He saved them for His name’s sake.”

Into this subject I shall endeavor to look this morning. May God make it profitable to each of us and may we be found among the number who shall be saved “for His name’s sake.” Treating the text verbally—and that is the way most will understand—here are four things. First, a glorious Savior—“He saved them.” Secondly, a favored people—“He saved them.” Thirdly a Divine reason why He saved them—“for His name’s sake.” And fourthly an obstruction conquered, in the word, “nevertheless,” implying that there was some difficulty that was removed. “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake.” A Savior. The saved. The reason. The obstruction removed.

I. First, then, here is A GLORIOUS SAVIOR—“He saved them.” Who is to be understood by that pronoun, “He”? Possibly many of my hearers may answer, “Why, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of men.” Right, my Friends. But not all the Truth. Jesus Christ is the Savior. But not more so than God the Father, or God the Holy Spirit! Some persons who are ignorant of the system of Divine Truth think of God the Father as being a great Being full of wrath and anger and justice but having no love. They think of God the Spirit, perhaps, as a mere influence proceeding from the Father and the Son. Now nothing can be more incorrect than such opinions! It is true the Son redeems me, but the Father gave the Son to die for me and the Father chose me in the everlasting election of His Grace. The Father blots out my sin, the Father accepts me and adopts me into His family through Christ. The Son could not save without the Father any more than the Father without the Son! And as for the Holy Spirit, if the Son redeems, don’t you know that the Holy Spirit regenerates? It is He who makes us new creatures in Christ, who begets us, again, unto a lively hope, who purifies our soul, who sanctifies our spirit and who, at last, presents us spotless and faultless before the Throne of the Most High, accepted in the Beloved. When you say, “Savior,” remember there is a Trinity in that word—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—this Savior being three Persons under one name! You cannot be saved by the Son without the Father, nor by the Father without the Son, nor by Father and Son without the Spirit. But as they are One in Creation, so are they One in salvation working together in one God for our salvation and unto that God be glory everlasting, world without end. Amen.

But, note here, how this Divine Being claims salvation wholly to Himself. “Nevertheless HE saved them.” But, Moses, where are you? Did you not save them, Moses? You stretched the rod over the sea and it divided in halves. You lifted up your prayer to Heaven and the frogs came and the flies swarmed and the water was turned into blood and the hail smote the land of Egypt. Were not you their Savior, Moses? And you Aaron, didn’t you offer the bullocks which God accepted, didn’t you lead them, with Moses, through the wilderness? Were not you their Savior? They answer, “No, we were the instruments, but He saved them. God made use of us but unto His name be all the Glory and none unto ourselves.” But, Israel, you defeated a strong and mighty people—did not you save yourself? Perhaps it was by your own holiness that the Red Sea was dried up. Perhaps the parted floods were frightened at the piety of the saints that stood upon their banks. Perhaps it was Israel that delivered itself. No, no, says God’s Word. He saved them. They did not save themselves, nor did their fellow men redeem them. And yet, mark you, there are some who dispute this point—who think that men save themselves, or, at least—that priests and preachers can help to do it! We say that the preacher, under God, may be the instrument of arresting man’s attention, of warning him and awakening him. But the preacher is nothing! God is everything! The most mighty eloquence that ever distilled from the lips of a seraphic preacher is nothing apart from God’s Holy Spirit! Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, are anyone—God gave the increase and God must have all the Glory.

There are some we meet with here and there who say, “I am a convert of Mr. So-and-So. I am a convert of the Reverend Dr. This-or-That.” Well, if you are, Sir, I cannot give you much hope of Heaven—only God’s converts go there! Not proselytes of man, but the redeemed of the Lord! Oh, it is very little to convert a man to our own opinions, but it is really something to be the means of converting him to the Lord our God! I had a letter some time ago from a good Baptist minister in Ireland, who very much wanted me to come over to Ireland, as he said, to represent the Baptist interest, because it was low and, perhaps, it might lead the people to think a little more of Baptists. I told him I would not go across the street merely to do that, much less would I cross the Irish Channel! I would not think of going to Ireland for that! But if I might go there to make Christians under God and be the means of bringing men to Christ, I would leave it to them what they would be afterwards and trust to God’s Holy Spirit to direct and guide them as to what denomination they should consider nearest akin to God’s Truth. Brothers and Sisters, I might make all of you Baptists, perhaps, and yet you would be none the better for it! I might convert you all in that way, but such a conversion would be that you would be washed to greater stains, converted into hypocrites and not into saints! I have seen something of wholesale conversions. Great revivalists have risen up. They have preached thundering sermons that have made men’s knees knock together. “What a wonderful man!” people have said. “He has converted so many under one sermon.” But look for his converts in a month and where will they be? You will see some of them in the alehouse, you will hear others of them swear, you will find many of them rogues and cheats, because they were not God’s converts but only man’s! Brethren, if the work is done at all, it must be done of God, for if God does not convert, there is nothing done that shall last and nothing that shall be of any use for eternity!

But some reply, “Well, Sir, but men convert themselves.” Yes, they do and a fine conversion it is. Very frequently they convert themselves. But then that which man did, man undoes. He who converts himself one day, unconverts himself the next! He ties a knot which his own fingers can loosen. Remember this—you may convert yourselves a dozen times over, but, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh” and, “cannot see the kingdom of God.” It is only “that which is born of the Spirit” that “is Spirit,” and is, therefore, able to be gathered at last into the spirit-realm where only spiritual things can be found before the Throne of the Most High. We must reserve this prerogative wholly to God! If any man states that God is not Creator, we call him infidel. But if any man entrenches upon this Doctrine, that God is the absolute Maker of all things—we hiss him down in a moment! An infidel of the worst kind, he is more bold who tells men that they may convert themselves whereas God does it all. “He” only, the great Jehovah—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and “He saved them for His name’s sake.”

Thus have I endeavored to clearly set out the first Truth of the Divine and glorious Savior.  
II. Now, secondly, THE FAVORED PERSONS—“He saved

 them.” Who are they? You will reply, “They were the most respectable people that could be found in the world. They were a very prayerful, loving, holy and deserving people. And, therefore, because they were good, He saved them.” Very well, that is your opinion—I will tell you what Moses says— “Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitudes of Your mercies, but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them.” Look at the 7th verse and you will have their character. In the first place, they were a stupid people— “Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt.” In the next place, they were an ungrateful people—“they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies.” In the third place, they were a provoking people—“they provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.” Ah, these are the people whom free Grace saved! These are the men and these the women whom the God of all Grace condescends to take to His bosom and to make anew.  
Note, first, that they were a stupid people. God sends His Gospel not always to the wise and prudent but unto fools—  
*“He takes the fool and makes him know  
The wonders of His dying love.”*  
Do not suppose, my Hearer, because you are very unlettered and can scarcely read—do not imagine because you have always been brought up in extreme ignorance and have scarcely learned to spell your name that, therefore, you cannot be saved! God’s Grace can save you and then enlighten you!  
A Brother minister once told me a story of a man who was known in a certain village as a simpleton and was always considered to be soft in the head. No one thought he could ever understand anything. But one day he came to hear the Gospel preached. He had been a drunken fellow having wit enough to be wicked which is a very common kind of wit. The Lord was pleased to bless the Word to his soul so that he became a changed character. And what was the marvel of all was his religion gave him something which began to develop his latent faculties! He found he had something to live for and he began to try what he could do. In the first place he wanted to read his Bible that he might read his Savior’s name. And after much hammering and spelling away, at last he was able to read a chapter. Then he was asked to pray at a Prayer Meeting. Here was an exercise of his vocal powers. Five or six words made up his prayer and down he sat! But by continually praying in his own family at home, he came to pray like the rest of the Brothers and Sisters and he went on till he became a preacher! And, singularly enough, he suddenly had a depth of understanding and a power of thought such as are seldom found among ministers who only occasionally occupy pulpits! Strange it was, that Grace should tend to develop his natural powers—giving him an objective—setting him devoutly and firmly upon it and so bringing out all his resources that they were fully shown. Ah, ignorant ones, you need not despair! He saved them! Not for their sakes—there was nothing in them why they should be saved. He saved them not for their wisdom’s sake, but, ignorant though they were, understanding not the meaning of His miracles, “He saved them for His name’s sake.”  
Note, again, they were a very ungrateful people and yet He saved them. He delivered them times without number and worked mighty miracles for them, but they still rebelled. Ah, that is like you, my Hearer. You have had many deliverances from the borders of the grave. God has given you house and food day after day and provided for you and kept you to this hour. But how ungrateful you have been! As Isaiah wrote, “The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib, but My people do not know, Israel does not consider.” How many there are of this character, who have favors from God, the history of which they could not give in a year, but yet what have they ever done for Him? They would not keep a horse that did not work for them, nor as much as a dog that would not notice them. But here is God. He has kept them day by day and they have done a great deal against Him, but they have done nothing for Him. He has put the bread into their very mouths, nurtured them and sustained their strength—and they have spent their strength in defying Him, in cursing His name and breaking His Sabbath! “Nevertheless He saved them.” Some of this sort have been saved—I hope I have some here now who will be saved by conquering Grace, made new men and women by the mighty power of God’s Spirit. “Nevertheless He saved them.” When there was nothing to recommend them, but every reason why they should be cast away for their ingratitude, “Nevertheless He saved them.”  
And note, once more, they were a provoking people—“They provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.” Ah, how many people there are in this world who are a provoking people to God! If God were like man, who among us would be here today? If we are provoked once or twice, up goes the fist! With some men, their passion stirs at the very first offense. Others who are somewhat more placid will bear offense after offense, till at last they say, “there is an end to everything and I can bear that no longer. You must stop it, or else I must stop you!” Ah, if God had that temper, where would we be? Well might He say, “My thoughts are not as your thoughts. I am God, I change not, or else you sons of Jacob had been consumed.” They were a provoking people, “nevertheless He saved them.” Have you provoked Him? Take heart! If you repent, God has promised to save you! And what is more, He may, this morning, give you repentance and even give you remission of sins—for He saves provoking people for His name’s sake! I hear one of my Hearers say—“Well, Sir, that is encouraging sin with a vengeance!” Is it, indeed, Sir! Why? “Because you are talking to the very worst of men. And you are saying that they may yet be saved!” Pray tell, Sirs, when I spoke to the worst of men, did I speak to you or not? You say, “No. I am one of the most respectable and best of men.” Well then, Sir, I have no need to preach to you, for you think you do not need any. “The whole have no need of a physician, but they who are sick.” But these poor people, whom you say I am encouraging in sin, need to be spoken to. I will leave you. Good morning to you! You keep to your own Gospel and I wonder whether you will find your way to Heaven by it!  
No, I do not wonder—I know you will not unless you are brought as a poor sinner to take Christ at His Word and be saved for His name’s sake! But I say farewell to you and I will keep on in my course. Why did you say I encourage men in sin? I encourage them to turn from it! I did not say He saved the provoking people and then let them still provoke Him as they had done before. I did not say He saved the wicked people and then let them sin as they did before. You know the meaning of the word, “saved.” I explained it the other morning. The word, “saved,” does not mean merely taking men to Heaven—it means more—it means saving them from their sin! It means giving them a new heart, new spirits, new lives. It means making them into new men. Is there anything licentious in saying that Christ takes the worst of men to make them into saints? If there is, I cannot see it. I only wish He would take the worst of this congregation and make them into the saints of the living God and then there would be far less licentiousness! Sinner, I comfort you. Not in your sin, but in your repentance! Sinner, the saints of Heaven were once as bad as you have been. Are you a drunk, a swearer, an unclean person? “Such were some of them. But they have been washed: but they have been sanctified.” Is your robe black? Ask them whether their robes were ever black? They will tell you, “Yes, we have washed our robes.” If they had been black, they would not have needed washing. “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Then, Sinner, if they were black and were saved, why not yourself?—

*“Are not His mercies rich and free?  
Then say, my Soul, why not for thee?  
Our Jesus died upon the tree,  
Then why, my Soul, why not for thee?”*

Take heart, Penitents—God will have mercy on you! “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake.”

III. Now we come to the third point—THE REASON OF SALVATION— “He saved them for His name’s sake.” There is no other reason why God should save a man but for His name’s sake. There is nothing in a sinner which can entitle him to salvation, or recommend him to mercy. It must be God’s own heart which must dictate the motive why men are to be saved. One person says, “God will save me because I am so upright.” Sir, He will do no such thing! Says another, “God will save me because I am so talented.” Sir, he will not. Your talent? Why you driveling, selfconceited idiot—your talent is nothing compared with that of the angel that once stood before the Throne of God! They sinned and were cast into the bottomless Pit forever! If He would save men for their talent, He would have saved Satan. For he had talents enough. As for your morality and goodness, it is but filthy rags and He will never save you for anything you do! None of us would ever be saved if God expected anything of us— we must be saved purely and solely for reasons connected with Himself and lying in His own bosom! Blessed be His name, He saves us for “His name’s sake.” What does that mean? I think it means this—the name of God is His Person, His attributes and His Nature. For His Nature’s sale, for His very attributes’ sake, He saved men and, perhaps, we may also include this—“My name is in Him”—that is, in Christ. He saves us for the sake of Christ, who is the name of God. And what does that mean? I think it means this—

He saved them, first, that He might manifest His Nature. God was all Love and He wanted to manifest it. He showed it when He made the sun, the moon and the stars and scattered flowers over the green and laughing earth. He showed His love when He made the air balmy to the body and the sunshine cheering to the eye. He gives us warmth even in winter, by the clothing and by the fuel which He has stored in the heart of the earth, but He wanted to reveal Himself still more. “How can I show them that I love them with all My Infinite heart? I will give My Son to die to save the very worst of them and so I will manifest My Nature.” And God has done it—He has manifested His Power, His Justice, His Love, His Faithfulness and His Truth. He has manifested His whole Self on the great platform of salvation! It was, so to speak, the balcony on which God stepped to show Himself to man—the balcony of salvation—here it is He manifests Himself by saving men’s souls!

He did it, again, to vindicate His name. Some say God is cruel. They wickedly call Him a tyrant. “Ah,” says God, “but I will save the worst of sinners and vindicate My name. I will blot out the stigma. I will remove the slur. They shall not be able to say that, unless they are filthy liars, for I will be abundantly merciful. I will take away this stain and they shall see that My great name is a name of love.” And said He, again, “I will do this for My name’s sake, that is, to make these people love My name. I know if I take the best of men and save them, they will love My name. But if I take the worst of men, oh, how they will love Me! If I go and take some of the offscouring of the earth and make them My children, oh, how they will love Me! Then they will cleave to My name—they will think it more sweet than music. It will be more precious to them than the spikenard of the Eastern merchants. They will value it as gold, yes, as much fine gold. The man who loves Me best is the man who has most sins forgiven—he owes much, therefore he will love much.” This is the reason why God often selects the worst of men to make them His. Says an old writer, “All the carvings of Heaven were made out of knots— the Temple of God is a cedar one but the cedars were all knotty trees before He cut them down.” He chose the worst, that He might display His workmanship and His skill, to make unto Himself a name. As it is written, “It shall be unto Me for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” Now, dear Hearers, of whatever class you are, here is something I have to offer well worthy of your consideration, namely—that if saved, we are saved for the sake of God, for His name’s sake and not for our own!

Now this puts all men on a level with regard to salvation. Suppose that in coming into this garden, the rule had been that everyone must make mention of my name as the key of admittance? The law is that no man is to be admitted for his rank or title but only by the use of a certain name. Up comes a lord. He makes use of the name and comes in. Up comes a beggar, all in patches. He makes use of the name—the law says it is only the use of the name that will admit you—he makes use of it and he enters, for there is no distinction. So, my Lady, if you come, with all your morality, you must make use of His name—if you come, poor filthy inhabitant of a cellar or an attic—and make use of His name, the doors will fly wide open, for there is salvation for everyone who makes mention of the name of Christ and for none other! This pulls down the pride of the moralist, abases the self-exaltation of the self-righteous and puts us all, as guilty sinners, on an equal footing before God to receive mercy at His hands! “For His name’s sake,” and for that reason alone.

IV. I have detained you too long. Let me close by noticing obstacles removed, in the word, “nevertheless.” I shall do that in somewhat of an interesting form, by way of parable.

Once upon a time, Mercy sat upon her snow-white throne, surrounded by the troops of Love. A sinner was brought before her, whom Mercy designed to save. The herald blew the trumpet and after three blasts thereof, with a loud voice, he said, “O Heaven and Earth and Hell, I summon you this day to come before the Throne of Mercy, to tell why this sinner should not be saved.” There stood the sinner trembling with fear. He knew that there were multitudes of opponents who would press into the Hall of Mercy and with eyes full of wrath, would say, “He must not and he shall not escape. He must be lost!” The trumpet was blown and Mercy sat placidly on her throne until there stepped in one with a fiery countenance. His head was covered with light, he spoke with a voice like thunder and out of his eyes flashed lightning “Who are you?” said Mercy. He replied, “I am Law. The Law of God.” “And what have you to say?” “I have this to say,” and he lifted up a stony tablet, written on both sides. “These ten commands, this wretch has broken! My demand is blood, for it is written, ‘The soul that sins, it shall die.’ He must die, or Justice must.” The wretch trembles, his knees knock together, the marrow of his bones melts within him as if they were foes dissolved by fire. He shakes with very fright. Already he thought he saw the thunderbolt launched at him! He thought he saw the lightning penetrate into his soul! Hell yawned before him in imagination and he thought himself cast away forever! But Mercy smiled and said, “Law, I will answer you. This wretch deserves to die. Justice demands that he should perish—I award you your claim.” And oh, how the sinner trembles! But he pleads, “But there is One yonder who has come with me today. My King. My Lord. His name is Jesus, He will tell you how the debt can be paid and I can go free.” Then Jesus spoke and said, “O Mercy, I will do your bidding. Take Me, put Me in a garden. Make Me sweat drops of blood. Then nail me to a tree, scourge my back before you put me to death. Hang me on the Cross. Let blood run from my hands and feet. Let me descend into the grave. Let me pay all the sinner owes. I will die in his place!”

And the Law went out and scourged the Savior, nailed Him to the Cross and, coming back with his face all bright with satisfaction, stood again at the throne of Mercy and Mercy said, “Law, what have you now to say?” “Nothing,” he said, “fair angel, nothing.” “What? Not one of these commands against him?” “No, not one! Jesus, his Substitute, has kept them all—has paid the penalty for his disobedience and now, instead of his condemnation, I demand as a debt of Justice that he be acquitted.” “Stand you here,” said Mercy, “sit on my throne. I and you together will now send forth another summons.” The trumpet rang again. “Come here, all you who have anything to say against this sinner, why he should not be acquitted!” And up comes another—one who often troubled the sinner—one who had a voice not as loud as that of the Law but still piercing and thrilling. A voice whose whispers were like the cuttings of a dagger. “Who are you?” says Mercy. “I am Conscience. This sinner must be punished! He has done so much against the Law of God that he must be punished. I demand it. And I will give him no rest till he is punished, nor even then, for I will follow him even to the grave and persecute him after death with unutterable pangs.” “No,” said Mercy, “Hear me,” and while Conscience paused for a moment, she took a bunch of hyssop and sprinkled Conscience with the blood, saying, “Hear me, Conscience, the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleans us from all sin. Now have you anything to say?” “No,” said Conscience, “nothing.”—

*‘Covered is his unrighteousness*

*From condemnation he is free.’*  
“Henceforth I will not grieve him. I will be a good conscience unto him, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The trumpet rang a third time and growling from the innermost vaults, up there came a grim black fiend with hate in his eyes and hellish majesty on his brows! He is asked, “Have you anything against that sinner?” “Yes,” he said, “I have. He has made a league with Hell and a covenant with the grave and here it is signed with his own hand. He asked God to destroy his soul in a drunken fit and vowed he would never turn to God. See, here is his covenant with Hell!” “Let us look at it,” said Mercy. And it was handed up, while the grim fiend looked at the sinner and pierced him through with his black looks. “Ah but,” said Mercy, “this man had no right to sign the deed. A man must not sign away another’s property. This man was bought and paid for long beforehand. He is not his own! The covenant with Death is annulled and the league with Hell is torn in pieces. Go your way Satan!” “No,” said he, howling again, “I have something else to say—that man was always my friend. He always listened to my insinuations. He scoffed at the Gospel, he scorned the Majesty of Heaven. Is he to be pardoned while I repair to my hellish den, forever to bear the penalty of guilt?” Said Mercy, “Depart, you fiend. These things he did in the days of his unregeneracy. But this word, ‘nevertheless,’ blots them out! Go to your Hell—take this for another lash upon yourself—the sinner shall be pardoned but you—never, treacherous fiend!” And then Mercy, smilingly turned to the sinner and said, “Sinner, the trumpet must be blown for the last time!” Again it was blown and no one answered. Then the sinner stood up and Mercy said, “Sinner ask yourself the question—you ask of Heaven, of earth, of Hell—can any condemn you?” And the sinner stood up and with a bold loud voice said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” And he looked into Hell and Satan lay there, biting his iron bonds. And he looked on earth and earth was silent. And in the majesty of faith, the sinner did even climb to Heaven, itself, and he said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God?” And the answer came, “No. He justifies.” “Christ?” Sweetly it was whispered, “No. He died.” Then turning round, the sinner joyfully exclaimed, “Who shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” And the once condemned sinner came back to Mercy. Prostrate at her feet he lay and vowed henceforth to be hers forever if she would keep him to the end and make him what she would desire him to be. Then no longer did the trumpet ring but angels rejoiced and Heaven was glad, for the sinner was saved!

Thus, you see, I have what is called, dramatized the thing. But I don’t care what it is called. It is a way of arresting the ear, when nothing else will. “Nevertheless.” There is the obstruction taken away! Sinner, whatever is the “nevertheless,” it shall never the less abate the Savior’s love! Not the less shall it ever make it but it shall remain the same—

*“Come, guilty soul and flee away  
To Christ and heal your wounds!  
This is the glorious Gospel-Day  
Wherein Free Grace abounds!  
Come to Jesus, Sinner, come.”*

On your knees weep out a sorrowful confession! Look to His Cross and see the Substitute! Believe and live! You almost demons, you that have gone farthest in sin—now—EVEN NOW—Jesus says, “If you know your need of Me, turn unto Me and I will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #72 New Park Street Pulpit 1

ISRAEL AT THE RED SEA  
NO. 72

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 30, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“He rebuked the Red Sea also and it was dried up: so he led them**through the depths, as through the wilderness.”  
**Psalm 106:9.**

SEVERAL Sabbaths ago we preached upon the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt by the blood of the Passover—and we told you, then, that we believed that event to be typical of the coming forth of God’s people from that spiritual house of bondage, that furnace of mental suffering from where they are delivered by the Omnipotent Grace of God at the time of their conversion. This morning we pursue the narrative. No doubt the children of Israel supposed that now all was over. The Egyptians had sent them away, entreating them to depart and loading them with riches. Terror had smitten the heart of Egypt, for from the king on the throne, to the prisoner in the dungeon, all was dismay and fear on account of Israel. Egypt was glad for them when they departed. Therefore the children of Israel said within themselves, “We shall now march to Canaan at once. There will be no more dangers, no more troubles, no more trials. The Egyptians, themselves, have sent us away and they are too much afraid of us to ever molest us again. Now shall we tread the desert through with hasty footsteps. And when a few more days have passed, we shall enter into the land of our possession—the land that flows with milk and honey!” “Not quite so speedily,” says God. “The time is not arrived yet for you to rest. It is true I have delivered you from Egypt. But there is much you have to learn before you will be prepared to dwell in Canaan. Therefore I shall lead you about and instruct you and teach you.” And it came to pass that the Lord led the children of Israel about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, till they arrived over against Baalzephon, where, on either side, the craggy mountains shut them in. Pharaoh hears of it. He comes upon them, to overcome them. And they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of their lives!

Now, Beloved, it is usually so with the Believer—he marches out of Egypt spiritually at the time of his conversion and he says within himself, “Now I shall always be happy.” He has bright eyes and a light heart, for his fetters have been dashed to the ground! He feels no longer the lash of conscience upon his shoulders. “Now,” he says, “I may have a short life, but it will be a happy one”—

*‘A few more rolling years at most,*

*Will land me on fair Canaan’s coast.’*  
And then I shall have no more warfare, no more fighting, no more disturbance. I shall be at peace.” “Not quite as you desire,” says God. “Oh, you little one, I have more to teach you before you are prepared for My palace.” Then He commences to lead us about and bring us into straits and perils. The sins which we thought had utterly left us are hunting us behind, while impassible floods block up the way! Even trembling Israel, halting by the Red Sea, is but a faint emblem of that terrible position into which the child of God usually falls within a few weeks or months after he has come out of the land of Egypt!

I shall preach, this morning, a sermon which I hope will be useful to such of you as have lately come to know the Lord. You were expecting to build tabernacles in which to dwell on the summit of the mountains of joy forever. But you find, on the contrary, that you have very great troubles and conflicts. And perhaps now you have a more terrible trial than you ever experienced in all your life before! I will endeavor to show you that this is just what you might have expected—that there will be a Red Sea very soon after you come out of your house of bondage! Others of you, my dear Friends, have passed through all these things many years ago. You can say—

*“Many days have passed since then,  
Many changes I have seen,  
Yet have been upheld till now.  
Who could hold me up but You?”*

But I am sure you will be glad to revisit the spot where God delivered you from your distresses. We find it very pleasant to look upon the place where we were taught in our school days, or to visit the haunts of our childhood. So you who are gray-headed in the cause of your Master will not find it very tedious work to go back a little way—and look to that Red Sea which God rebuked and dried up—that you might be led through it even as through the wilderness!

Coming, then, to the subject. The children of Israel had their difficulties and so, generally, the child of God has his very soon after he comes out of Egypt. But then they had their refuges. And moreover, God had a great and grand design to answer in all the troubles into which they were brought.

I. Taking the first point, the children of Israel just now had THREE DIFFICULTIES—three exceedingly great dangers. And so I believe that every heir of Heaven, within a very short period after the time of his deliverance will meet with the same.

The first they had was a great trial sent by God, Himself. There was the Red Sea in the front of them. Now, it was not an enemy that put the sea there—it was God, Himself! We may therefore think that the Red Sea represents some great and trying Providence which the Lord will be sure to place in the path of every new-born child. He does this in order to try our faith and to test the sincerity of our trust in God. I do not know, Beloved, whether your experience will back up mine—but I can say this— the worst difficulty I ever met with, or I think I ever meet with, happened a little time after my conversion to God. And you must generally expect, very soon after you have been brought to know and love Him, that you will have some great, broad, deep Red Sea straight before your path, which you will scarcely know how to pass. Sometimes it will occur in the family. The husband says, for instance—if he is an ungodly man—“You shall not attend such-and-such a place of worship! I positively forbid you to be baptized, or to join that Church.” There is a Red Sea before you. You have done nothing wrong. It is God, Himself, who places that Red Sea before your path. Or perhaps before that time, you were carrying on a business which now you cannot conscientiously continue. And there is a Red Sea which you have to cross in renouncing your means of livelihood. You don’t see how it is to be done—how you are to maintain yourself—and to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Or perhaps your employment calls you among men with whom you lived before on amicable terms, but now, all of a sudden, they say, “Come! Won’t you do as you used to do?” There, again, is a Red Sea before you! It is a hard struggle. You do not like to come out and say, “I cannot, I shall not, for I am a Christian.” You stand still, half afraid to go forward. Or perhaps it is something proceeding more immediately from God. You find that just when He plants a vine in your heart, He blasts all the vines in your vineyard. And when He plants you in His own garden, then it is that he uproots all your comforts and your joys. Just when the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon you, your own little candle is blown out—just when you seem to need it most, your gourd is withered, your prosperity departs and your flood becomes an ebb! I say again, it may not be so with all of you, but I think that most of God’s people have not long escaped the bondage of Egypt before they find some terrible rolling sea lashed, perhaps, by tempestuous winds directly in their path. They stand aghast and say, “God, how can I bear this? I thought I could give up all for You, but now I feel as if I could do nothing! I thought I would be in Heaven and all would be easy. But here is a sea I cannot ford—there is no squadron of ships to carry me across—it is not even bridged by Your mercy! I must swim it, or else I fear I will perish.”

Then the children of Israel had a second difficulty. They would not have cared about the Red Sea a single atom if they had not been terrified by the Egyptians who were behind them. These Egyptians, I think, may be interpreted this morning by way of parable. They represent those sins of ours which we thought were clean dead and gone. For a little while after conversion, sin does not trouble a Christian. He is very happy and cheerful in a sense of pardon. But before many days are past, he will understand what Paul said, “I find another law in my members so that when I would do good, evil is present with me.” The first moment when a new Christian wins his liberty, he laughs and leaps in an ecstasy of joy! He thinks, “Oh, I shall soon be in Heaven! As for sin, I can trample that beneath my feet!” But mark you—scarcely has another Sabbath gladdened his spirit before he finds that sin is too much for him! The old corruptions which he fancied were laid in their graves get a resurrection and start up afresh! He begins to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He sees all his old sins galloping behind him—like Pharaoh and his host pursuing him to the borders of the Red Sea! There is a great trial before him. Oh, he thinks he could bear that. He thinks he could walk through the Red Sea. But oh, those Egyptians—they are behind him! He thought he would never have seen them again—they were the plague and torment of his life when they made him work in the brick kiln—he sees his old master, the very man who desired to lay the lash on his shoulders, riding post haste after him! And there are the eyes of that black Pharaoh, flashing like fire in the distance. He sees the horrid, scowling face of the tyrant and how he trembles! Satan is after him and all the legions of Hell seem to be let loose, if possible, utterly to destroy his soul!

At such a time, moreover, our sins are more formidable to us than they were before they were forgiven, because when we were in Egypt, we never saw the Egyptians mounted on horses, or in chariots—they only appeared as our task-masters, with their whips. But now these people see the Egyptians on horseback, clad in armor. They behold all the mighty men of valor come out with their war-like instruments to slay them! So did I find, speaking for myself, that when I first knew the weight of sin, it was as a burden, as a labor, as a trouble. But when the second time—

*“I asked the Lord that I might grow,  
In faith and love and every Grace.  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly His face,”*

and when He answered me by letting all my sins loose upon me, they appeared more frightful than before! I thought the Egyptians in Egypt were not half as bad as the Egyptians out of Egypt. I thought the sins I knew before, though they were cruel taskmasters, were not half as much to be dreaded as those soldier-sins, armed with spears and axes, with chariots of iron, with scythes upon their axles, hastening to assault me! It is true—they did not come so near to me as before, nevertheless they occasioned more fright than when I was their slave! It may be, poor child of God, you are astonished and amazed to find that your sins are more black, now, than they were when you were under conviction. You may feel that you have less hope than you had then, and that your condition is possibly far worse than when the Law was beating you from head to foot and rubbing brine into the wounds of your conscience! You may be saying, “Ah, well, I never thought of this. If I am a child of God—if I were really pardoned and forgiven—how could it be that I should be so vexed and tormented with a sense of my guilt? And if all my transgressions have been cast into the depths of the sea, how is it that I hear the armies of my sins rattling their hoofs and chariot wheels behind me?” I tell you, Beloved, in the name of the Lord, that is just what you ought to have expected! The pangs after we come out of Egypt are at times even more painful than those we feel in the house of bondage! And there is usually a time of trial a little while after the new birth which is even more terrible and awful than the previous agony of the soul, though not usually so protracted. This was the second difficulty.

But there was a third difficulty which, perhaps, worked them more misery than either of the other two. These poor children of Israel had such faint hearts. They no sooner saw the Egyptians, than they began to cry out. And when they beheld the Red Sea before them, they murmured against their deliverer! A faint heart is the worst foe a Christian can have. While he keeps his faith firm—while the anchor is fixed deep in the rock—he never need fear the storm. But when the hand of faith is palsied, or the eye of faith is dim, it will go hard with us. As for the Egyptian, he may throw his spear—but we can catch it on the shield of faith— we are not terrified by the weapon. But if we lose our faith, the spear becomes a deadly dart! While we have faith, the Red Sea may flow before us as deep and dark as it pleases—for like Leviathan, we trust we can snuff up Jordan at a draught. But if we have no faith, then at the most insignificant streamlet, which Faith could take up in her hands in a single moment and drink like Gideon’s men, poor Unbelief stands quivering and crying, “Ah, I shall be drowned in the floods, or I shall be slain by the foe! There is no hope for me. I am driven to despair. It would have been better for me that I had died in Egypt, than that I should come here to be slain by the hand of the enemy.” The child of God, when he is first born, has but very little faith because he has had but little experience. He has not tried the promises and, therefore, he does not know their faithfulness. He has not used the arm of his faith and, therefore, the sinews of it have not become strong. Let him live a little longer and become confirmed in the faith and he will not care for Red Seas, nor yet for the Egyptians! But just then, his little heart beats against the walls of his body and he laments, “Ah, me! Ah, me! O wretched man that I am! How shall I ever find deliverance?”

This description of spiritual geography may be uninteresting to some because they may not have traveled through this part of the wilderness— but others will view it with attention. Who cared about maps of the Crimea till there was war there? But as soon as our soldiers were engaged in that particular spot, every man bought a map of the Crimea and studied the boundaries of Russia. So if you have been in these straits, you will be very glad of my map, this morning, that you may see the way in which God leads His family. These are the three dangers—a great trial, sins pursuing us behind and an exceedingly faint heart.

II. But, thanks be to God! The children of Israel had THREE HELPS. Oh, child of God, do you discern this mystery? Whenever you have three trials, you will always have three promises! And if you had 40 afflictions, you would have 40 measures of Grace! Yes, and if you had a million troubles, you would have a million measures of mercy! The Israelites had three difficulties and they had three helps. And as the difficulty was put in the way by Providence, so Providence also furnished a relief.  
The first help they had was Providence. Providence put the Red Sea there and piled the rocks on either side. Providence, represented by the fiery cloudy pillar, had led them to its shore and conducted them into the trouble. And now the same pillar of Providence came to their assistance! They had not come there undirected and, therefore, they would not be left unprotected, for the same cloudy pillar which led them there, came behind them to protect them!  
Cheer up, then, heir of Grace! What is your trial? Has Providence brought it upon you? If so, unerring Wisdom will deliver you from it. What is it you are now exercised upon? As truly as you are alive, God will remove it! Do you think God’s cloudy pillar would ever lead you to a place where God’s right arm would fail you? Do you imagine that He would ever guide you into such a trouble that He could not conduct you out again? The Providence which apparently misleads, will, in verity, befriend you! That which leads you into difficulties guards you against your foes. It casts darkness on your sins, while it gives light to you! How sweet is Providence to a child of God, when he can reflect upon it! He can look out into this world and say, “However great my troubles, they are not so great as my Father’s power! However difficult may be my circumstances, yet all things around me are working together for good. He who holds up yon unpillared arch of the starry heavens can also support my soul without a single apparent prop! He who guides the stars in their well-ordered courses, even when they seem to move in mazy dances—surely He can overrule my trials in such a way that out of confusion He will bring order! And from seeming evil, our God produces lasting good. He who bridles the storm and puts the bit in the mouth of the tempest, surely He can restrain my trial and keep my sorrows in subjection! I need not fear while the lightning is in His hands and the thunder sleeps within His lips— while the oceans gurgle from His fist—and the clouds are in the hollow of His hands. I need not fear while the rivers are turned by His foot and while He digs the channels of the sea. Surely He whose might wings an angel, can furnish a worm with strength! He who guides a cherub will not be overcome by the trials of an ant like myself! He who makes the most ponderous orb roll in dignity and keeps its predestined orbit, can make a little atom like myself move in my proper course and conduct me as He pleases.” Christian, there is no sweeter pillow than Providence! And when Providence seems adverse, still believe it, lay it under your head—for, depend upon it—there is comfort in its bosom! There is hope for you, child of God! That great trouble which is to come in your way in the early part of your pilgrimage is planned by Love, the same Love which shall interpose as your Protector!  
Again—the children of Israel had another refuge, in the fact that they knew that they were the Covenant people of God and that, though they were in difficulties, God had brought them there and, therefore, God, (with reverence let me say it), was bound in honor to bring them out of that trouble into which He had brought them! “Well,” says the child of God, “I know I am in a strait but this one thing I also know, that I did not come out of Egypt by myself—I know that He brought me out. I know that I did not escape by my own power, or slay my first-born sins myself—I know that He did it. And though I fled from the tyrant—I know that He made my feet mighty for travel, for there was not one feeble in all our tribes. I know that though I am at the Red Sea, I did not run there uncalled, but He bade me go there and, therefore, I give my fears to the winds! For if He has led me here into this difficulty, He will lead me out and lead me through!”  
But the point to which I want to direct your attention most of all is this. The third refuge which the children of Israel had, was in a man— and neither of the two others, without that, would have been of any use. It was the man, Moses. He did everything for them. Your greatest refuge, O child of God, in all your trials, is in a Man—not in Moses—but in Jesus Christ! Not in the servant, but in the Master. He is interceding for you, unseen and unheard by you, even as Moses did for the children of Israel. If you could but, in the dim distance, catch the sweet syllables of His voice as they distil from His lips and see His heart as it speaks for you, you would take comfort! God hears that Man when He pleads! He can overcome every difficulty. He has not a rod, but a Cross, which can divide the Red Sea. He has not only a cloudy pillar of forgiving Grace, which can dim the eyes of your foes and keep them at a distance—He has a Cross— which can open the Red Sea and drown your sins in the very midst! He will not leave you. Look on yonder Rock of Heaven—He stands, Cross in hand, even as Moses with his rod! Cry to Him, for with that uplifted Cross He will cleave a path for you and guide you through the sea! He will make those hoary floods, which had been friends, forever, stand asunder like foes! Call to Him and He will make you a way in the midst of the ocean and a path through the pathless sea. Cry to Him and there shall not a sin of yours be left alive—He will sweep them all away! And the king of sin, the devil, too, shall be overwhelmed beneath the Savior’s blood, while you shall sing—

*“Hell and my sins obstruct my path,  
But Hell and sin are conquered foes!  
My Jesus nailed them to His Cross,  
And sang the triumph as He rose.”*  
Look you to that Man who once on Calvary died!  
III. GOD HAD A DESIGN IN IT. And here, also, we wish you to regard with attention what God’s design is in leading the Christian into exceedingly great trials in the early part of his life. This is explained to us by the Apostle Paul. A reference Bible is the best commentator in the world. And the most heavenly exposition is the searching out of kindred texts and comparing their meaning. “They were all baptized,” says the Apostle, “unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.” God’s design in bringing His people into trouble and raising all their sins at their heels, is to give them a thorough baptism into His service, consecrating them forever to Himself. I mean by baptism, this morning, not the rite, but what baptism represents. Baptism signifies dedication to God—initiation into God’s service. It is not when we are first converted that we so fully dedicate ourselves to God, as afterwards, when some great Red Sea rolls before us. I would be delighted to see some of you get into trouble. Am I unkind to utter such a wish? Well I repeat it, I would, for I shall never get you into the Church unless you do! You will never come forward and make a thorough dedication of yourselves to God till you have had a sharp trial. Rest assured of this, that sharp trials were no slight cause of the heroic devotion of the martyrs, confessors and missionaries, who so thoroughly consecrated themselves to their Master’s service. The great purpose of all our affliction is the promotion of an entire dedication to Christ in all our hearts! It is only in the font of sorrow that we are baptized with Christ’s Baptism. No holy chrism has efficacy to baptize. It is the Spirit who, alone, can dedicate us in the waters of the sea of tribulation. You are brought into these straits, young Believer, that you may at such a time receive the Baptism for God! Do not, I beseech you, let the time pass by, for there are some who neglect it, who, afterwards never perfectly know what it is to be “baptized unto Jesus in the cloud and in the sea.” They say, “they will wait a little while,” but the consequence is, they wait a very long while! They say they will do, tomorrow, what they ought to do today. Beware how you let slip the opportunity which God presents you, that you may devote yourself publicly to Him. The very first time after conversion, when we come into straits and difficulties, is intended that we should then be dedicated to Jesus and come out openly as the children of the living God!  
Now, Beloved, let these thoughts rest with you. You may think them unimportant but I am sure they are not. Believe me, you ought, indeed, to acknowledge yourselves on the Lord’s side. If God is God, serve Him! If Baal is God, serve him! There is nothing which I would more earnestly and ardently press upon you than the great duty of decision for Jesus Christ. How many of you have a faint and indistinct hope that when you die, you will be Christ’s people? And yet you must confess that you are not decided for Christ! You think you are His, but you often neglect duty and frequently allow what you think a little sin to stain your conscience. You are not godly in worldly affairs. But, beseech you, put the Truth of God and righteousness into one scale and put your own worldly gain into the other—and see which is the most important—and if you think that prudence dictates attention to this world instead of God, then remember, that is Hellish prudence and comes of the devil! And, therefore, reject it! If you were Egyptians, I might tell you to serve another master. But since you are God’s people, or profess to be, I charge home upon you. And I beg of you, if you make a profession, to be out-and-out with it! How we loathe those hot and cold people who are neither one thing nor the other! You who hold with the hare and run with the hounds—you who are first one thing and then another—you who are half horse, half alligator and neither of them—you who are something between the two, who are neither Christians nor worldlings in your own opinion. We know which you are! I have often thought what a consistent religion the Roman Catholic would be for some of you go-between people. You are not exactly children of God, but you would not like to be called the children of the devil. Where should we put you, at last? It would be a very convenient thing to have a purgatory for you—to place you somewhere between the two! But as we have no such place, we do not wish to have any such characters and we believe there are none such. You are either servants of God, or servants of the devil! Don’t stand between two opinions—but just say, once and for all—whom you will serve! If you choose the devil, choose him, love him, serve him and rejoice in your choice. If you choose Hell, go there, rush madly there—it’s a fearful dwelling place for eternity—an awful home forever! But if you choose God, I beseech you, be in downright earnest about it. The religion of the present day—what mockery it is to call it religion at all—I protest. I believe the common religion of this age will not carry half those who profess it to Heaven. It is a religion which they might easily carry to Heaven, for it is too light to burden them, but it is too fragile to carry them there! They have a godliness which has not eaten up their soul. I heard a minister say once to his people that, “it would be a long time before the zeal of God’s house would eat them up.” Take the Churches all round—what a slumbering brotherhood they are! There might almost be a controversy between the prince of this world and the prince of Heaven to whom they belonged. But I beseech you, let there be a marked and decided difference between you and the world! Let your heart be steeped in godliness! Let your life be saturated with religion! Take care that, “whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, you do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.” So shall God see His great design subserved of making you to be baptized unto Jesus, “in the cloud and in the sea.”  
In concluding, there is one sad aspect of this picture which I wish you to regard. It is this. Some of you are journeying in an unconverted state to that brook from which there is no return. At death you will find a Red Sea in your way—the sea of death staring you in the face! When you come before it, you will find no bridge, no ships. You must wade that sea alone. And, mark you, if you are now living in an ungodly condition and are doing so when you die—as certainly as you are here—just when that great sea of death is rolling before you, all the Egyptian hosts of your sins will harass you in the rear! All your sins will come bellowing after you. You will have your iniquities like wild winter wolves pursuing you, thirsty for blood and swift to slay! You will hear fiends howling in your ears. And when the raging flood of Jordan has made your bones shake and your marrow quiver, just then you will see the red eyes of your sins peering through the darkness of your despair and hear the howling of your former transgressions as they hound you to the pit of Hell, seeking after your soul’s blood! Ah, then, my Hearer, you will have no cloudy pillar to give you light! You will have no pillar of darkness to confuse your foes. But you will have behind you all your sins—and before you that black sea of death which you are compelled to cross! But mark you, those sins will swim that sea with you. They will not be like the Egyptians which were drowned. When you are wading through the sea, you will find your sins like hounds fixing on a stag, drinking your heart’s blood. Yes, when you have landed in eternity, you will find there was not a single one drowned in the sea but that they are all alive—every sin grown into a giant, every lust brandishing a thousand arms, each arm bearing a thousand horrid fingers of flame—and each finger a claw of iron which shall tear your soul! Oh, I warn you against these Egyptians of your sins, for unless the blood is sprinkled on your doorpost and on your lintel—and unless the destroying angel smites those sins for you, they will assuredly follow you across the sea! I think I see you there! You are just in the midst of Jordan. Poor soul! The river, itself, is work enough for a man to wade through it. For dying is not easy labor. The waters are rushing into his lips and gurgling in his throat like a whirlpool. How he shakes! White as the floods around him, he quivers like the very waves themselves! And, ah, just when in his fell despair, he shrieks—see the devils feed him with black fruits of Hell? And when he quivers most, see there the scalding brimstone of Almighty God rained upon his body? Just when he is shrieking in death’s torments, then is it that Satan takes the opportunity to howl in his face and show him his glaring eyes of fire, to terrify his poor soul worse than death, itself! Sinner! When you die, remember that you will have to die two deaths—one death which we shall see—another death which we only know of by the shrieks, groans and anguish which even we may hear on this side of the grave!  
But what you will experience in the next world, I cannot picture to you, I cannot tell you. Those dim shapes of horror I cannot paint for you. Those fierce flames of misery I cannot now describe. That doleful misery of desolation and that awful lament of eternity, I cannot endure to hear! I dare not lift the veil that conceals the dread scenes, which haunt the spirits of the ungodly departed!  
Well, then, what shall you do to escape this death? What can you do to be saved? Why, Sinner, in the first place, of yourself you can do nothing at all! But, in the second place, there is One—a Man who can do all for you! He is the Man, Christ Jesus. If you believe on Him, filthy as you are and wretched and outcast and vile, you shall never see the second death but shall have eternal life abiding in you! And when you die in this world, instead of black fiends to hound you through the river, you will have sweet angels playing over the stream, waiting to waft you unto Glory. You will feel bright spirits fanning your hot brow with their soft wings. You will hear songs, sweet as the music of Paradise, and when your troubles are the strongest, you will have a peace with God “which passes all understanding.” An “unspeakable joy and full of glory,” which shall enable you to “swallow up death in victory.” “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned.” Poor, trembling, penitent Sinner, put your hand inside the hand of Christ. Now fall on His Mercy. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” I beseech you for Christ’s sake, “be you reconciled to God.” And if you are penitents, may God give you faith that you may be Believers!

As for the rest of you, remember, before you go, I have told you no fable, but the Truth of God. You may go away and say, “There is no Hell.” Well, suppose there is none—Believers will be as well off as you are. But suppose there is—and there is for a certainty—suppose yourselves in it? You cannot, then, suppose yourselves out of it anymore. May God grant His blessing, for Jesus’ sake, turning many of you to righteousness. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1992 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SONG FOR THE FREE—HOPE FOR THE BOUND  
NO. 1992

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces.  
Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!**

**For He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in two.” Psalm 107:14-16.**

MY anxious, prayerful desire this morning is that some who have been in the condition described in the text may come out of it into full redemption. They have been too long in prison and now the silver trumpet sounds—liberty to the captives! Jesus has come into the world to break the gate of brass and to cut the bars of iron in two. Oh, that my prayer might be heard for those who are in bondage! I trust that some of those who are now immured in the dungeon of despondency will say, “Amen,” to my prayer and, if they are praying inside and we are praying outside—and the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, comes to open the prison doors, then there will be a Jubilee before long.

This passage, of course, literally alludes to prisoners held in durance by their fellow men. What a sad world man has made of this earth! With superfluity of evil, man has multiplied his Bastilles! As if there were not misery enough to the free, he invents cells and chains! One’s blood boils when standing in those living graves in which tyrants have buried their victims out of sight and hearing! Could the most fierce of wild beasts display such cruelty to their kind as men have shown to men? By the horrors of such imprisonments, one must estimate the joy of being set free. To God it is a glory that, in the order of His Providence, He often provides a way of escape for the oppressed. Cruel dynasties have been overthrown, tyrants have been hurled from their thrones and then enlargement has come to those who were shut up. Liberated ones should, indeed, “praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.”

But the various scenes in this Psalm were intended to describe spiritual conditions. The second verse is a key to the whole song—“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” The deliverance here intended is one which is brought to us by redemption—and comes by the way of the great Sacrifice on Calvary. We are redeemed with the precious blood of Him who surrendered His own liberty for our sakes and consented to be bound and crucified that He might set us free. My grateful heart seems to hear Him saying again, as He did in the Garden of Gethsemane, “If you seek Me, let these go their way.” His consenting to be bound brought freedom to all those who put their trust in Him.

I shall endeavor, as God shall help me, to speak of the text spiritually— and we will consider it under the heading of three questions. First, Who are the favored men of whom the text speaks? Secondly, How has this remarkable deliverance been worked. Thirdly, What shall be done about it? The text tells us how to act. “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!”

I. First, let us ask, WHO ARE THESE FAVORED MEN?  
These favored persons were guilty men, as you will see by the context— “Because they rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.” Hear this, you sinful ones, and take heart! God has worked great wonders for a people whom it seemed impossible for Him to notice. If they came into prison through rebellion, you would expect Him to leave them there. Yet rebels are set free by an act of immeasurable Grace! The Redeemer has received gifts for men, “yes, also for the rebellious.” These men were despisers of God’s Word—was there a Gospel of freedom for them? Yes! It is for them that Jehovah, in abounding Grace, has worked miracles of mercy.  
The persons described by the Psalmist were guilty of overt acts. They were in actual rebellion against the commands of the Most High. Their rebellion was not a single hasty act—their entire lives were a continuance of their wicked revolt. From their childhood, they went astray. In their youth, they provoked the Lord, and in their manhood they disobeyed Him more and more. They were in open opposition to their Creator, Benefactor and Lord. I have no doubt that I am speaking to many who must admit that they have been actual and willful transgressors against the Lord of Love. They have turned unto Him their back, and not the face—they have not been servants, but rebels.  
The persons here spoken of were as evil in their hearts as in their lives, for they, “despised the counsel of the Most High.” Perhaps they intellectually rejected the teaching of Holy Scripture and scorned to receive what the Lord revealed. They refused to yield their understandings to Infallible teaching and judged their own thoughts to be better than the thoughts of God. The counsel of the Most High, though marked by the sublimity of Him from whom it came, appeared to them to be less high than their own soaring theories and, therefore, they despised it. To some men, any doctrine is more acceptable than that of Scripture. They gladly hear what doubters say, but they will not hear what God the Lord shall speak. His counsel of instruction, His counsel of command, His counsel of promise— His whole counsel they cast away from them—and they take counsel of their own conceit!  
Now this actual and mental sin, when it is brought home to a man’s awakened conscience, fills him with dismay. Because he has transgressed with hand and heart, the convicted sinner is in sore dismay. O my Hearer, are you in distress this day through your own fault? Do you wonder that you are in trouble? Did you expect to go in the way of evil and yet to be happy? Did you never hear those words, “There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked”? Know you not that they are “like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt”? Now that you find yourself taken in the thorns of your own folly, are you at all surprised? The Scripture says, “Have you not procured this unto yourself?” Are not these the wages of sin? Thank God you have not yet received more than the earnest money of that terrible wage! But, depend upon it, sin is a hard paymaster! Sin and sorrow are wedded in the very nature of things and there is no dividing them. They that sow iniquity shall reap the same. Turn as it may, the river of wickedness at last falls into the sea of wrath! He that sins must smart unless a Savior can be found to be his Surety and to smart for him.  
So, then, these people who were set free were, by nature, guilty men who could not have deserved the Divine interposition. Hear this, you consciously guilty, you that are condemning yourselves and confessing your faults! This is good news for you, even for you! The Lord sets free the men whose own hands have forged their manacles. This is Free Grace, indeed! These marvels of delivering love were performed, not for the innocent in their misfortune, but for the guilty in their rebellion. “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”  
Go a little further and you will notice that these persons were doomed men, for they “sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.” It means that they were in the condemned cell, waiting for execution. No light could come to them, for their condemnation was clear. No escape could be hoped for. Not a ray of hope came from any direction. In a short time they must be taken out to execution, so that the shadow of their death fell with its damp, dread, deadening influence upon their spirits. Do I address any such this morning? Ah, my Friend, I can sympathize with you as you sit here and feel that you are doomed! I, too, have felt that sentence of death within me! I knew myself to be “condemned already,” because I had not believed on the Son of God. I recollect how those words, “condemned already,” rang in my ears as I should think the bell of St. Sepulcher’s used to sound in the ears of the condemned in Newgate, warning them that the time was come to go out upon the scaffold.  
When the shadow of eternal wrath falls upon the heart, nothing worse can be imagined, for the conscience bears sure witness that God is just when He judges, condemns and punishes. When a man feels the shadow of death upon him, infidel arguments are silenced, self-conceited defenses are banished and the heart consents to the justice of the Law of God which declares, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” My Brothers and Sisters who remember being in this state of conscious condemnation will join me in praying for those who are now in that condition, for they need our pity and love. O my Hearers, condemned in your own consciences, take heart and hope, for you are the sort of people whom Jehovah, in His Grace, delights to set free! Those doomed ones were the men of whom our text sings, “He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.” It is your condemned condition which needs free mercy and, behold, the Lord meets your need in His boundless Grace!  
To the doomed, the Lord God in Christ Jesus will give free pardon this morning! I speak with great confidence, for my trust is in the God of Love. The Lord is going to hear prayer for you sinners. You shall be brought from under the black cloud which now threatens you with overwhelming tempest—you shall come forth from the condemned cell, not to execution—but to absolution! Blessed be the name of the Lord! He passes by transgression and does it justly through the Atonement of His Son!

But next, these persons were bound men, for they, “sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.” Their afflictions were like iron, hard and cold, and such they could not break from. The iron entered into their souls. The rust cut the flesh and poisoned the blood. They were bound in a double sense—addiction within and iron without. It is a terrible thing when a man feels that he is lost and that he cannot get away from destruction. An evil habit has got him within its iron grasp and will not relax its hold. Even though he would, he cannot loosen himself from the thralldom of his sin. He has become a slave and there is no escape for him. “O my God!” he cries, “what can I do?” The more he strains, the more the iron seems to hold him. His attempts to be free from evil only prove to him how much enslaved he is. What an awful compound is described in the text—“affliction and iron”! The bondage is mental and physical, too. The enslaved spirit and the depraved flesh act and react upon each other and hold the poor struggling creature as in an iron net! He cannot break off his sins. He cannot rise to a better life.  
I know that some of you who are here at this time are in this case. You long to be delivered, but you are unable to cut the cords which hold you. You are greatly troubled, day after day, and cannot rest—and yet you get no farther. You are striving to find peace, but peace does not come. You are laboring after emancipation from evil habits, but the habits still hold you! Friend thus bound, to you I have to tell the glad news that Jesus Christ has come on purpose that He might proclaim the opening of the prisons to them that are bound! “He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in two.” God is able to liberate men from every bond of sin over which they mourn! Would you be free? He will open the door! There is no habit so inveterate, there is no passion so ferocious, but God can deliver you from it! If you will but trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, His Grace is a hammer that can break your chains! Let Jesus say, “Loosen him and let him go,” and not even devils can detain you! Christ’s warrant runs over the whole universe and, if He makes you free, you will be free, indeed!  
To advance another step, these persons were weary men, for we read of them, “He brought down their heart with labor.” This does not happen to all in the same degree, but to some of us, this labor was exceedingly grinding and exhausting. Our hearts were lofty and needed bringing down—and the Lord used means to do it. With some, temporal circumstances go wrong—where everything used to prosper, everything appears to be under a blight. From abundance they descend to need. Perhaps the health also begins to give way and from being strong and hearty men they become sickly and feeble. How often this tames proud spirits! If it is not outward sorrow, it is within that they labor till their heart is brought low. They cannot rest and yet they try all earthly remedies for ease—they go to the theater, they sport with frivolous companions, they laugh, they dance, they plunge into vice—but they cannot shake off the burden of their sin!  
It will not be removed. As the giraffe, when the lion has leaped upon him, bears his enemy upon his shoulders and cannot dislodge him, even though he rushes across the wilderness like the wind, so the sinner is being devoured by his sin while he madly labors to shake it off. While the unconverted seek to rest themselves, they do but increase their weariness. They labor, yes, labor as in the very fire, but it is labor in vain! In vain do they hasten to every religions service and attend to every sacred ceremony! In vain do they try to mourn—how can they put feeling into a heart of stone? If they could, they would make their tears flow forever and their prayers forever rise, but, to their horror, they accomplish nothing! The whip of the Law sounds and they must get to their tasks, again—but the more they do, the more they are undone. Like one that, having fallen into a slough, sinks all the deeper into the mire through every struggle that he makes, so do they fall lower and lower by their efforts to rise!  
I understand those awful struggles of yours, so desperate and yet so unavailing. God is bringing down your heart with labor, but have you not had enough of this? Do you not remember that love word, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”? Sweet promise! Will you not believe it and avail yourselves of it? Will you not come to Jesus and take the rest which He gives? How I wish you would come this very day! I beseech the Holy Spirit to turn you to Jesus. The Lord has come forth with power to draw you and to bring you away from your weariness unto the sweet rest which remains for the people of God! Poor doves, fly no further! Return to your Noah! These of whom we speak at this time were as weary men as ever you can be, but Jesus gave them rest—why should He not give rest to you? Though bad, and banned, and bound, and burdened, there is yet hope, for the Lord can set you free!  
Again, these persons were downcast men—“they fell down, and there was none to help.” “We cannot go on any longer,” they said. “It is useless to exert ourselves. We cannot escape God’s wrath and yet we cannot bear it. We are at our wits’ end. There is no use in our trying to be better. We must give it up in despair.” “They fell down.” This shows that they were quite spent. The captive has been grinding at the mill till he cannot go another round. Even the lash cannot make him take another step—he falls in faintness—as though life had gone. So have we known men forced to acknowledge that they are, “without strength.” This was always true, but they did not always feel it. Now they have come to this, that if Heaven could be had for one more effort—and Hell escaped for one more good work—yet they could not do it! They fall down and there they lie, a heap of helplessness, dead in trespasses and sins! Where is the boasted power of their free will?  
Now it is to you who have fallen down, even to you, that the word of this salvation is sent! The Lord Jesus delights to lift up those that lie at His feet. He is a great over-turner—“He has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.” He that flies aloft on the eagle’s wings of pride shall be brought low by the shafts of vengeance. But he that humbles himself to the dust shall be lifted up! He that has fallen down and lies in the dust at the feet of Jesus, lies on the doorstep of eternal life! The Lord will give power to the weak and increase strength to those who have no might. I rejoice when I hear any one of you acknowledge his weakness, since the Lord Jesus will now show forth His power in you!  
In fact, these persons were helpless men—“They fell down and there was none to help.” What a word that is—“None to help”! The proverb says, “God helps those who help themselves.” There is a sort of truth in it, but I venture to cover it with a far greater Truth of God—“God helps those that cannot help themselves.” When there is none to help you, then God will help you. “There was none to help”—no priest, no minister, not even a praying wife, or a praying mother could do anything! The man felt that human helpers were of no use. His bed was shorter than that he should stretch himself upon it and his covering was narrower than that he should wrap himself up in it. Now he saw that there was no balm in Gilead, there was no physician there—and he looked to a higher place than Gilead for balm and medicine! The balm for such a wound as his must come from Heaven, for on earth there was “none to help.” This is a fitting epitaph to be placed over the grave of self-righteousness! This also is the death-knell of priestcraft, birthright membership and sacramentarianism. The conscience sees that there is “none to help.” Is this your case? Then you are the men and women in whom God will work the marvels of His Grace—and bring you out where you shall walk in light and peace!  
There was only one good point about these people—they did, at last, take to praying—“Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble.” It was not much of a prayer to hear. It was too shrill to be musical. It was too painful to be pleasant. “They cried” like one in sore anguish. They cried like a child that has lost its mother. “They cried” like some poor wounded animal in great pain. Do you tell me that you cry, but that your cry is a very poor one? I know it and I am glad to hear you say so, for the less you think of your cry, the more God will think of it! Do you value yourself according to your prayers? Then your prayers have no value in them! When you think that your prayers are only broken words, hideous moans and wretched desires, then you begin to form a right estimate of them and thus you are on true ground where the Lord of Truth can meet you.  
“They cried.” Was it any credit to them to cry? Why, no, it was what they were forced to do! They would not have cried to the Lord, even then, if they could have done anything else. They cried when their hearts had been brought so low that they fell down. It is a good fall when a man falls on his knees. O my dear Hearer, whatever else you do, or do not do, are you crying to God in secret for His Grace? Then, as surely as the Lord lives, you shall come out into liberty! A praying man shall never be sent to perdition. There is that about prayer which makes it a token for good, a pledge of blessings on the road, a door of hope in dark hours. Where is the man that cries? Where is the man that prays? That is the man of whom it shall be said, and of others like he, “The Lord brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces.”  
May the Lord bless the description which I have given, so that some of you may see yourselves as in a mirror and be encouraged to hope that the Lord will save you as He has saved others like you! If you see yourself in the text, take home the comfort of it and make use of it. Do not look at it and say, “This belongs to somebody else.” You Brothers and Sisters in bondage; you self-despairing sinners—you are the ones for whom Christ went up to the Cross! If you saw a letter directed to yourself, would you not open it? I should think so! The other day a poor woman received in a letter a little help sent to her by a friend. She was in great distress and she went to that very friend begging for a few shillings. “Why,” said the other, “I sent you money yesterday, by an order in a letter!” “Dear, dear!” said the poor woman, “that must be the letter which I put behind the mirror!” Just so—and there are lots of people who put God’s letters behind the mirror and fail to make use of the promise which is meant for them! Come, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, come and taste my Master’s love, yes, take of it freely and be filled with heavenly rest!

II. Secondly, may God’s Spirit go with us while we answer the question—HOW HAS THIS DELIVERANCE BEEN WORKED? You that have been set free should tell how you were emancipated! Let me tell my story first. It was the best news I ever heard when it was told me that Jesus died in my place. I sat down in my misery, hopeless of salvation, ready to perish, till they told me that there was One who loved me and for love of me was content to yield His life for my deliverance! Wonder of wonders, He had actually borne the death penalty for me! They said that the Lord of Glory had become Man to save men and that if I trusted Him, I might know assuredly that He had suffered in my place and had blotted out my sins. I marveled much as I heard this, but I felt that no one could have invented news so strange! It surpassed all fiction, that the offended God should, Himself, take my nature and, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ should pay my debts, suffer for my sins and put those sins away!  
I heard the blessed tidings—there was some comfort even in hearing it—and I believed it and clutched at it as for life. Then did I begin to live! I believe that Truth of God today—all my hope lies there. If any of you wonder that I show zeal for the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ, you may cease to ponder! Would not any one of you stand up for his wife and children? This Truth is more to me than wife and children—it is everything to me! I am a damned man for all eternity if Christ did not die for me! I will put it no more softly than that. If my Redeemer had not borne my sins in His own body on the tree, then I would have to bear them in my own body in the place of endless misery! I have no shade of a hope anywhere but in the Sacrifice of Jesus! I cannot, therefore, give up this Truth of God—I had sooner give up my life!  
I heard that the Son of God had suffered in my place that I might go free. I believed it and I said to myself, “Then I have no business to be sitting here in darkness and in the shadow of death.” I shook myself from my lethargy. I arose and went out of my prison—and as I moved to go out, a light shone round about me and my fetters fell clanking to the ground! What glorious musical instruments they were! The very things that had galled me so long, now brought me joy! I found that the iron gate, which I thought could never be unlocked, opened to me of its own accord. I could not believe that it was true, it seemed too wonderful! I thought I must be dreaming. I very soon knew of a surety that it was I, myself—the cold night air blew down the street of my daily care and I said, “Oh, yes, I am still on earth and it is true! And I am free from despair and delivered from the curse!” This is how I came out to liberty—I believed in Jesus, my Redeemer. Today, my dear Brothers and Sisters here, hundreds of them, would, each one, tell the story in a different way, but it would come to the same thing.  
Follow me while we go a little into Scriptural detail and learn from David how the Lord sets free the captives.  
First, our deliverance was worked by the Lord Himself. Listen—“HE brought them out of darkness.” Write that, “HE,” in capital letters, Mr. Printer! Have you in the house any specially large letters? If so, set up that word in the most prominent type you have—“HE brought them out of darkness.” Read also the 16th verse—“HE has broken the gates of brass.” Did the Lord send an angel to liberate us? No, HE came Himself in the Person of His dear Son! When the Lord Jesus Christ had paid our enormous debt, did He leave us to accept our quittance entirely of our own free will, apart from His Grace? Ah, no! The Holy Spirit came and made us willing in the day of His power! “HE.” “HE.” “HE” worked all the work for us and all our works in us! “HE brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.” “Oh that men would praise the Lord, for HE has broken the gates of brass.” It is the Lord’s doing! It is marvelous in our eyes. There is no salvation worth the having which has not the hand of the Godhead in it. It needs Father, Son and Holy Spirit to save a soul! None but the Trinity can deliver a captive soul from the chains of sin and death and Hell. Jehovah Himself saves us!  
Next, the Lord did it alone—“He has broken the gates of brass.” Nobody else was there to aid in liberating the prisoner. When our Lord Jesus trod the winepress, He was alone. When the Spirit of God came to work in us eternal life, He worked alone. Instruments are condescendingly used to convey the Word of Life, but the life of the Word is wholly of God. As to the Divine Father, is it not true, of “His own will begat He us by the Word of Truth”? He is the Author of our spiritual life and He, alone. None can share the work of our salvation with Him and none can divide the Glory. Ho, you that are captives, are you looking for some man to help you? Remember, I pray you, that there is “none to help.” “Salvation is of the Lord.” Remember that verse, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” That is to say, there is no one else in the work of salvation except God! O Soul, if you have to do with Christ Jesus, you must have Him at the beginning; you must have Him in the middle; you must have Him in the end and you must have Him to fill up every nook and corner from the first to the last. He alone has done it!  
Note, too, that what He did was done by the Lord’s own goodness, for the Psalmist says, “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!” His goodness took the form of mercy, as it is said in the first verse of this Psalm, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever!” It must have been mercy, because those whom it blessed were as undeserving as they were miserable! They were guilty—guilty in action and guilty in thought—they had rebelled against the Words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. Yet He came and set them free! You and I are always needing to know before we give alms to beggars, “Are they deserving people?” God gives the alms of His Grace only to the undeserving! We respond to those who have a claim upon us—God remembers those who have no claim whatever upon Him! “Ah,” says one, “but the people cried!” I know they did, but they did not even do that till He first of all brought down their heart with labor! Prayer is a gift from God as well as an appeal to God. Even prayer for mercy is not a cause, but a result! Divine Grace is at the back of prayer and at the base of prayer. These prisoners would not have prayed if God had not worked upon them and driven and drawn them to pray.—  
“*No sinner can be beforehand with Thee.  
Your Grace is most sovereign,  
Most rich and most free.”*  
So it has been with others and, therefore, have I hope that it will be so with you, my beloved Hearers! In the greatness of His goodness I trust my Lord will come and save you. It is not your goodness, but His goodness, which is the cause of hope. It is not your merit, but His mercy is His motive for blessing you. How greatly do I rejoice to remember that the Lord delights in mercy! It is His joy to pardon sin and pass by the transgressions of the remnant of His people.  
Note, once again, that while we are describing this great deliverance, we cannot help seeing that the Lord effected it most completely. What did He do? Did He bring them out of darkness? That was to give them light. Yes, but a man that is chained is only a little better off for getting light, for then he can see his chains all the more! Notice what follows—“and out of the shadow of death”—so the Lord gave them life as well as light. That “shadow of death” is gone. It can no longer brood over their darkened spirits. Yes, but when a man has light and life, if he is still in bondage, his life may make him feel his bondage the more vividly—and his light may make him long the more for liberty. But it is added, “and he broke their chains in pieces,” which means liberty. The Lord gave light, life and liberty—these three things. God does nothing by halves. He does not begin to save and then say, “I have done enough for you. I must stop midway.” Dear Heart, if the Lord comes to your prison, He will not merely light a lamp in your dungeon, though that were something. He will not merely revive your spirit and give you more life, though that were something. But He will break your chains and bring you out into the liberty with which Christ makes men free! He will finish His emancipating work. Do it, Lord! Do it now! Help men to believe in Jesus at this moment!  
There is one more point which I want you to notice very carefully. When the Lord does this, he does this everlastingly. He “broke their chains in pieces.” When a man was set free from prison in the old times when they used iron chains, the blacksmith came and took the chains off and then they were hung up on the walls. Have you never been in ancient prisons and seen the fetters and manacles hanging up ready for use? Yes, for use upon those who have already worn such jewelry—if they should come that way again! This is not the case, here, for He “broke their chains in pieces.” Note this right well, O child of God! You were once shut up as with gates of brass and bars of iron—and the devil thinks that one of these days he will get you behind those gates again! But he never will, for the Lord “has broken the gates of brass.” All the powers of darkness cannot shut us up with broken gates! Satan thinks he will imprison us again, but the bars of iron are cut in two! The means of our captivity are no longer available!  
My mind carries me to a certain scene and my eyes almost behold it. Behold Samson, the hero of Israel, shut in within the walls of Gaza. The Philistines boast, “Now will he be our captive.” He slept till midnight and then he arose. He found that he was shut up within the city and so he went to the gate. That gate was barred and locked, but what difference does it make? Israel’s champion bowed his great shoulders down to the gate—he took hold of both the posts, gave a tremendous heave—and in an instant tore up the whole construction from the earth in which it had been firmly placed! “He lifted the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron.” See in this thing a symbol of what our Lord Jesus Christ did when He arose from the dead. He carried away all that which held us captive—posts and bar and all! “He led captivity captive.”

When our Lord had led us forth from our prison, He said to Himself, “They shall never be shut up again, for now I will make sure work of it,” and therefore He broke the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in two. How then, can any child of God be shut up within the Gaza of sin again? How shall we be condemned when the Lord has put away our sin forever? No, the liberty received is everlasting liberty—we shall not see bondage any more. Oh, dear Souls, I want you to lay hold on this! You doomed and guilty! You downcast and wearied, there is everlasting salvation for you— not that which will save you today and will let you go back to your bondage tomorrow—but that which will make you the Lord’s free men forever! If you believe that Jesus is the Christ. If you believe in Him to save you, you shall be saved! It is not said half-saved, but saved! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” That cannot admit that we should go to Hell. Jesus says, “I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” “He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in two.” Lord, help some poor souls to sing this song today and receive, at this moment, everlasting salvation!  
III. I close with a practical question—WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT THIS? If such people as we have described have been brought into liberty, what is to be done about it? I do not want to tell you what to do. I would have you do it by instinct. Gladly would I, like Miriam, take a timbrel and go first and bid all the sons and daughters of Israel follow me in this song—“Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. He has brought out His captives and set His people free.” It naturally suggests itself to the liberated spirit to magnify the Lord. So the Psalmist put it, “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!”  
First, then, if the Lord has set any of you free—record it. See how David wrote it down. Write it in your diary. Write it so that friends may read it. Say, “The Lord has done great things for us.”  
When you have recorded it, then praise God. Praise God with all your heart. Praise God, everyone of you! Praise God every day! When you have praised God, yourselves, then entreat others to join with you! The oratorio of God’s praise needs a full choir. I remember, years ago, a bill connected with a religious service of a very pretentious character, and on this bill it promised that the Hallelujah Chorus should be sung before the sermon. The friend who led the singing for me at that time came in to me and asked if I could spare him. “See here,” he said, “a person has come from the service which has been advertised to say that they have nobody to sing the Hallelujah Chorus. The minister wants me to go down and do it.” I answered, “Yes. By all means go! If you can sing the Hallelujah Chorus, alone, don’t throw yourself away on me.”  
Then we smiled and, at last, broke out into a laugh—it was too much for our gravity! Surely, for a man to think that he can sufficiently praise God, alone, is much like attempting to sing the Hallelujah Chorus as a solo! The Psalmist therefore utters that great, “Oh!” “Oh that men would praise the Lord!” I do not think he said, “men,” for the word, “men,” is in italics—the translators are accountable for it. He means, “Oh that angels! Oh that cherubim and seraphim would praise the Lord! Oh that all creatures that have breath would praise the Lord for His goodness!” Even that would not be enough—let the mountains and the hills break forth before Him into singing—and let all the trees of the forest clap their hands. Let the sea roar and the fullness, thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. With a great, “Oh!” With a mighty sigh over the holy business which was far too great for himself, David felt moved to call upon all others to praise the Lord!  
I close with that, my Brothers, my Sisters—you that have been saved, praise God! Praise Him with the blessings He has lavished on you. I described them in three ways. With your light praise Him—the more you know, the more you see, the more you understand—turn it all into praise. Next, with your life praise Him—with your physical life, with your mental life, with your spiritual life—with life of every sort, even unto eternal life, praise the Lord. Liberty has been given us—let our freedom praise Him. Be like that man who was made straight, who went out of the Temple, walking and leaping and praising God. God has made you free, feel free to praise Him! And if men will not give you leave to praise, take French leave. Yes, take heavenly leave and praise God anywhere and everywhere!  
Listen how they sing the songs of Bacchus and of Venus in the streets and even wake us up in the night—therefore why may we not sing God’s praises in the same public fashion? We must praise Him! We will praise Him! We do praise Him! And we shall praise Him forever and ever!  
Praise Him with the heart He has changed, with the lips He has loosed, with the lives He has spared! A little while ago you could not speak a cheerful word, but now you can rejoice in God. Let those lips, from which He has taken the muzzle of dumb despair, be opened in His praise. Praise Him with all the talents He has lent you. If you have any power of thought, if you have any fluency of speech, praise Him! It you have any voice of song, praise Him. If you have health and strength, praise Him. Let every limb of your body praise Him—those members which were servants of sin, let them be instruments of righteousness unto God! Praise Him with your substance. Let your gold and silver, yes, and your bronze, praise Him! Praise Him with all that you have and with all that you are— and with all that you hope to be. Lay your all upon the altar. Make a whole burnt-offering of it. Praise Him with all the influence you have. If He has delivered you from the shadow of death, let your shadow, like that of Peter, become the instrument of God’s healing power to others!  
Teach others to praise God. Influence them by your example. Fill your house with music from top to bottom—perfume every room with the fragrance of living devotion! Make your houses belfries and be, yourselves, the bells forever ringing out the loud praises of the Lamb of God. He bore your sins—you bear His praises. He died for you, therefore live for Him! He has heard your prayers—let Him hear your praises! Let us together sing “hallelujah to God and the Lamb.” Let us stand upon our feet and with one voice and heart let us sing—  
*“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below!  
Praise Him above, you heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”*

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 107:1-32.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—906, 126, 136 (SONG II).

LETTER FROM: MR. SPURGEON:  
DEAR FRIENDS—A brief interval of relief from the incessant strain of my position has revived my spirit. And the prospect of some weeks of further rest has brought me rest by anticipation. No one can ever know till the Great Day shall reveal it, the great burden of responsibility which ordinarily presses upon me from day to day. If I am not borne up by the prayers of the Lord’s people, I cannot stand! Even now I do not forget the beloved flock at home—how can I? They and the whole work of the Lord are always on my heart. I beg to be in like manner daily remembered in supplication by those who have fellowship with me. This is at this moment my one urgent word—“BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US!”  
Yours heartily,

*C. H. SPURGEON.*Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #1824 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HISTORY OF SUNDRY FOOLS  
NO. 1824

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 1, 1885, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON JULY 17, 1884.

**“Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they draw near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” Psalm 107:17-20.**

THE Psalm contains one picture in four panels. It illustrates a single experience in its main outlines, for in every case it is written, “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses.” And yet each case is very different from any of the others. We have variety and similarity. It is just so in the case of the people of God. Our fall, our sin, our call by Grace, our prayer, the Lord’s answer to that prayer by Jesus Christ—in all these, “as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.” We are wonderfully alike as children of the first Adam and alike when we become children of the second Adam—and yet no two children of God are quite the same. In human families we meet with great diversity of features among those who are, nevertheless, the offspring of the same parents. In the great family of God, the diversity of the features is very wonderful, indeed. Look at the four pictures which are so much alike and which, indeed, do but represent one, and yet you shall discover in them marked diversity.

Learn this double lesson—that unless your spot is the spot of God’s children, you are none of His. And also, do not expect to find that spot exactly the same in you as it is in others of His undoubted offspring. As on earth all flesh is not the same flesh, and as in the heavens all glories are not the same glory, for there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars—so in the ordinary life of Christians here below there is one Spirit, but there are different operations. Therefore do not judge yourself by any man’s biography. Do not condemn yourself if, after reading John Bunyan’s, “Grace Abounding,” you say, “I never went into these dark places.” Be glad that you never did! After reading Madame Guyon, do not condemn yourself if you never heard her, “Torrents,” nor felt her ecstasies of Divine life. Be sorry that you never have and aspire after such things, but do not

 condemn yourself.

Here are four pictures and you may find your likeness in one of the four. But do not be so unwise as to condemn yourself if you are not seen in the other three. “I never went to sea,” says one, “this cannot picture me.” “I never traversed a Sahara,” says another, “this cannot picture me.” “I never was in prison in the dark,” says a third, “this cannot picture me.” But it is possible, dear Friend, that you have been a fool and, therefore, the sick fool may picture you! When you find yourself in one of the pictures, you may conclude that, as the four are but variations of the same subject, all the four, in some degree, belong to you. At any rate, if I cannot enter into Heaven by 12 gates, I shall be perfectly satisfied to go in at one.

I am only going to bring out two, out of the many thousands of things that lie packed away in the wonderful box of my text. There are two things—the miserable people and the merciful Lord.

I. THE MISERABLE PEOPLE, first. I am going to describe them and my objective in the description will be to show what some have been who, nevertheless, have been saved. These people are called fools. They abhorred all manner of food. They drew near to the gates of death. But they were saved for all that, for they cried unto God in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses! The inference will be that if I—if you— should happen to be in the same condition as these people, yet we may have hope that God will save us!

To begin with, the first description of them is that they were fools. Now, I must not call you fools, but you have, all of you, liberty to call yourselves so. I find it forbidden in Scripture for any man to call his brother, “fool,” but I do not find him forbidden to call himself so. Look well to yourself and see whether you are not, now, a fool—at least, if God’s Grace has saved you, you are bound to admit that you were once a FOOL in capital letters, for every unrenewed and unregenerate man is a fool! We call those fools who have a great lack of knowledge of things which it is necessary to know. Where other men find their way, they are lost. Where other men know what to do upon very simple matters, they are quite bewildered and cannot tell how to act. I remember when I did not know the way of salvation. I had heard it from my youth up and heard it explained very simply, too, but I did not know it.

Many must confess that though now they understand what faith in Jesus is, yet they were very slow in catching the idea. It is an idea which a babe in Grace can explain, but which wise men, classically instructed, do not receive. I may stand here and beat my very heart out in trying to make plain how men are to believe and live—and yet out of my congregation not one will receive God’s meaning into his heart unless God the Holy Spirit shall enlighten him—for we are such fools that the simplest matters of heavenly Truth are utterly unknown to us!

He, too, is a fool who, when he does know, does not make right use of his knowledge. He is a greater fool than the former one! He knows all about it, but yet he does not do it. He understands that the only way to be saved is to believe in Christ, but he does not believe. He knows that men must repent of sin if they would find mercy, but he does not repent of sin. He knows that life is uncertain and yet he is risking his soul upon the chances of his continuing to live. He lives as if he had a lease on his life and was absolutely certain that he could not die till he chose to be converted. Now this it is to be a fool—to act contrary to your own knowledge and better judgment. How many fools there are of this kind!

We call him a fool who hurts himself without any profit—without any justifying cause. The man who flings his life away to save a nation, or even to rescue one solitary person from death is a hero. But what is he who, for no motive whatever, will maim himself—will take away his own health—will take away his own life? Are there none such here? Look at the drunk! Look at the man who is guilty of unclean living! Look at such as prefer this world to the world to come and throw themselves away on trifles! O Sirs, there are many men that have injured themselves so that their sin lies in their bones! Even now they feel the result of their transgressions. The moth is foolish that flies into the candle and, having burnt itself, dashes back into the flame. We count the ox foolish that goes willingly to the shambles, but there are multitudes of men and women who take delight in sin and, though every cup around them is poisoned, yet they drink at it as though it were nectar! Verily, sinners are fools!

We are great fools when we think that we can find pleasure in sin, or profit in rebellion. We are great fools when we displease our God—when our best Friend, on whom our eternal future depends, is despised, neglected and even rejected and hated by us. It is the extreme of folly when a man loses the good will of one who can help him—when he rejects the love of a tender mother, or the counsel of a wise father. Some men seem resolved to make their enemies their friends—and their friends their enemies! They put darkness for light, and light for darkness. They go to find the living among the dead and true helpers among those who pander to their sins. Such fools have you and I been. Perhaps some here are such fools now.

I call that man a fool who throws away jewels that he may gather pebbles, who casts away gold and silver that he may gather up mire and dirt. And what do they do who fling away Heaven and eternal life for the sake of a transient joy, a momentary gain? Are there not some men living in this world only to get what will, one day, turn into smoke? They know that this great world and all the works of men that are here must be dissolved with fervent heat—and yet they labor to build a mansion for their immortal souls in this place, which is to be utterly burned up! And, meanwhile, You, O Son of God, Immortal Love, are treated as though You were a mere fiction! And You, great Father, fullness of Eternal Grace, they turn their backs on You! And O, holiness, virtue and immortal blessedness—all of you are allowed to go by while men are hunting for gewgaws and gathering trinkets that shall so soon be taken from them! If haply as you sit here you confess, “I have been a fool, I know I have,” then you may gather comfort from the fact that fools were saved! He that has gone to the utmost excess of unwisdom may yet hear the invitation of wisdom and come and learn at Christ’s feet all that is necessary for eternal life.

The next thing about these people is rather worse—they were not only fools, but sinners. The text says that “fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted.” You see they had several sorts of sin—transgression and iniquities. They began with one transgression and they went on to multiplied iniquities. There was first in their heart a transgression against God. Afterwards there were found in their lives many inequities, both towards God and towards man. Sin multiplies itself very rapidly. It grows from one to a countless multitude. We will not go into the details of the transgressions and iniquities that you may have committed, but here is the point—these people, who were fools and full of transgression and iniquity, nevertheless cried to God in their trouble—and He delivered them out of their distresses! What form has your sin taken? Think of it in your own heart. But, whatever form it has taken, God is able to forgive you! “All manner of sin and blaspheming shall be forgiven unto men.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” There is no sin which is unpardonable if men repent of it.

The sin that unpardonable is one of which no man ever thought of repenting, for it is a sin which is unto death and, when committed, the man is spiritually dead and never repents. If there is a sin upon you, however black and foul. If it is a horrible sin which I could not mention because it might crimson the cheek of modesty if I did but even hint at it—if you are covered with it, polluted with it beyond all imagination—yet, of the saints in Heaven it can be said, “such were some of you, but you are washed.” You are no more astray than certain others, or if you are, so much the greater shall be the glory of God’s Grace in saving you! It is written of our Lord that He is able to “have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.” O you out-of-the-way sinners, what a comfortable Word of God that is for you! No sin shall destroy you if you will come to the sinner’s Savior. No excellence of your own shall save you if you reject that Savior! Come in all your sin, though it reeks to Heaven— though the stench of it is loathsome in your own nostrils—yet come to Jesus, for, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

But we must go on with the picture. These people were not only fools and sinners, which are two bad things, but they had a third mischief about them—they were afflicted. “Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted.” Their affliction was evidently the result of their folly and their transgression. Do I address any who are in that case? I hardly like to say what may have happened to some here. They may be distressed in spirit and unable to pursue their business with anything like cheerfulness. They may be subject to doleful forebodings and heavy glooms—and all the result of sin in years gone by. They have now got to the core of the apple of sin. It is wonderfully sweet till you get to the core—and then it is bitter—yes, more bitter than death itself!

Once these men were fools and sinners and now they have to suffer for it. They are afflicted because of their transgression and their iniquities. Some suffer in body. Others suffer in estate—their property is all gone. They have spent all. Riotously, foolishly, wickedly it has gone. They had money once—they have none now. They had the means of livelihood and competence, but they have so sinned that they cannot be trusted now. They are waifs and strays on the great ocean, drifting about, nobody wanting them. How I long to say a word of comfort to those who are in that condition! If you repent, if you will arise and come to your Father, why should you not be delivered out of your distresses? Do you not see that God delivers such as you are? Is not the case before you in the text? They were fools afflicted, they were sinners afflicted, beginning to feel, even on earth, a part of the result of their sin. They began to reap those sheaves of fire which they sowed with such merry-making years ago and, as they put those sheaves into their bosom, they wondered how they could escape being immediately consumed. But they did escape and so may you! God has saved such as you now are and all those saved ones should encourage you to hope that He will save you!

The picture is getting black, but we must put on another coat of color. In addition to this, these people had fallen into a soul-sickness. Through their trouble and their consciousness of sin, they had fallen into such a state of illness that nothing could help them. The best food was brought to them, but they waved it away—their soul abhorred all manner of food. Some are in such a state that the amusements which once were joys to them are now wearisome. You have been lately to the theater and you used to be charmed there. You cannot make out what has come over it—it seems so dull to you! You used to enjoy cheerful evenings with your merry-making friends, but now you would sooner get upstairs alone, for you feel so wretched. When you are alone, there is one person who plagues you—if you could only get away from him, you would be content— but that person happens to be yourself and there appears to be no rest for you either in company or in solitude!

Your soul abhors all manner of food. I have known souls to get into such a state that books, interesting and instructive, they could not read any longer. They felt no interest in anything of the sort. And poetry and all the charms of art, which once they very properly enjoyed, could afford them no pleasure. The best mental recreation cannot give such persons any stay from their fierce, self-destroying thoughts. Yes, and they even refuse good spiritual food. If the preacher tries to give them milk for babes, that is too weak for them. If he brings out strong meat, that is too tough for their teeth. If he brings them “wine on the lees, well-refined,” that is too heating. If he offers the Water of Life, that is too cold. Nothing will suit them! They grumble at all kinds of teaching. Religious books do not cheer them—even the Bible, itself, seems stale and unprofitable. You are in a frightful condition, my Friends, are you not? You are so sick that the food which best would suit you is that which you least care for. Yet God has saved some who have fallen into this wretched way and He invites you to come to Him and trust in Him—with the promise that He will save even you, though you are as bad as you can be.

But the case was worse than that, for we read, “They draw near to the gates of death.” This poor creature was almost dead. He could see death’s gate and Hell’s gate right before him! He was lying at death’s door, expecting, any moment, to be thrown through the portal into eternal destruction and endless wrath! I remember when I lay in the bosom of despair in my own apprehension. I knew that I was condemned on account of sin and my conscience said, “Amen,” to the condemnation! I could not plead any reason why I should not at once be taken out to endless execution on account of my sin. And I certainly felt the dread shadow of coming wrath falling upon my soul.

AND YET I AM SAVED, blessed be God! And so shall you, dear Hearer, though you are ready to die and ready to be damned—you shall be saved by faith in Jesus! Though you begin to feel the fire shower falling and the first of the dread drops have already buried their way into your soul, you may yet escape! The Savior comes to those who—

*“Buried in sorrow and in sin,*

*At death’s dark door do lie. ”*  
He brings “salvation” to such and He says to the dying sinner, “This day has salvation come unto your house.” What a glorious Gospel we have to preach to you miserable people!

But yet we have not quite touched up the picture with the last shade of black. This man not only lay at death’s door, full of trouble, full of distress, but he was surrounded by many destructions. In the 20th verse we read, “and He delivered them from their destructions.” What? Are there many destructions to a man? Oh, yes, a great many! I have known one man destroyed by his shop, another by his wife, another by his children. Many a woman is destroyed by her clothes! Many a man is destroyed by his eating habits! Millions are destroyed by their drinking. Everything about us will destroy us unless God saves us! There are a thousand gates to Hell, though there is only one road to Heaven. One man may perish by debauchery; another may perish by respectability! One man may be lost in the ale-house; another man may be lost through his teetotalism if he makes a god of it!

One man may go down to Hell by his lack of common decency and another by his pride and self-righteousness! Do not deceive yourself—the way to ruin is easy and many crowd it. If you want to go to Heaven—well, we shall have to tell you a great deal about what is to be believed. But if you want to go to Hell, I have no need to tell you anything—“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” A little matter of neglect will land you in Hell! But it is not a little matter of thought that will bring you to Heaven—there must be a stirring up of the entire soul—an awakening of the whole man to seek after God in Christ Jesus or else you shall perish!

Surrounded, then, with destructions—snares about your bed, snares about your table, snares in your solitude, shares in the street, snares in your shop, snares at the dawn of day and snares at the setting of the sun—you are in awful, terrible danger! And yet persons surrounded with destructions have been saved, and why should not you? They have cried to God in their trouble and He has delivered them out of their destructions! Will He not do the same at your cry? What a charming Word of God is this for desponding spirits!

II. I have but a minute or two left, where I should have wished for an hour, to speak upon THE MERCIFUL LORD. Very briefly, indeed. This merciful Lord appears in this picture where you do not, at first, see Him. I think I see Him in that first verse—He sent the affliction. “Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted.” Ah me! “Were afflicted.” Who afflicted them, then? Why, their own Father— their own Shepherd—who saw that they would never come back to Him if it were not for affliction. I see you, Friend. You are a stray sheep and I could not get you back. Now you cry, “Alas, I am in trouble!” I am sorry that you should be troubled, but I am not altogether sorry. I can see the black dog is worrying you. It is that he may get you back to the Shepherd. Many will not come back till the black dog has his teeth in their flesh, but if it surely drives you to the Good Shepherd, it will be your true friend!

I question whether many of us came to the Lord Jesus Christ until we were afflicted in some way or other. Our bright days led us more and more into sin. Then came a dark day—and then we began to turn. “When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land.” Blessed be God for the famine! “He began to be in need”—now he will have to test his frivolous friends and flatterers! There was a gentleman who had drunk his champagne and put his feet under his mahogany, and the prodigal said, “Now I have fed that man, I dare say he will entertain me now I am in poverty.” “I cannot help you,” he replied. “Can you give me some employment?” “No. What are you worth? Well, you can feed my pigs.” And he “sent him into his fields to feed swine.” That is the black dog, again. If the gentleman had said, “Oh, yes, my dear young fellow, you were very generous when you had plenty of money! I am very sorry for you—come and live with me—while I have a crust you shall have part of it!”

That would have been the worst thing that could have happened, for the prodigal son would never have thought of going home! I say that your troubles are mercies in disguise. Your sicknesses, your poverty and your misery—oh, I bless God for them! The heavenly Father has sent this rumbling wagon to bring you home to Himself! Oh that you would but come to yourself! Oh that you would but come to Him! See, the Grace of God appears in the very affliction of these rebellious fools!

But note this, further— they began to pray—and here we see the Lord, again, for no one seeks after God till God has put the prayer into his heart and breathed a new life into his spirit!

Then as soon as he did pray, the Lord heard the prayer. We read, “He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” So, Beloved, all that God has to do, in order to save us, is to send us His Word! He has done that by sending His dear Son, who is the Incarnate Word. He sends us the Word in the shape of the Holy Scriptures. He sends us the Word in the preaching of His servant. But what we need most of all is to have that Word of God sent home by the power of the Holy Spirit! “He sent His Word, and healed them.” There is nothing that you need, tonight, but to have the Word which the Lord has spoken sealed home to your heart, so that you accept it and believe it. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

I want you to notice how the Lord rescued these people. You see, they could not eat. They had reached such a state of sickness that they could not take anything—they abhorred all manner of food and we do not find that the Lord sent them any food. No, He sent His Word. Did He send His Word like a tonic, to give them an appetite? No, He made surer work. Many doctors try to deal with the disease, but God does not. He deals with the patient, himself, and his constitution. He healed them radically. Then, when He had healed them, their appetite came back. They did not abhor all manner of food when once God had healed them! The Lord does not operate upon the symptoms, but upon the person! He does not deliver us from this sin and that sin and the other sin—He takes away the old heart, out of which the sin comes—and gives a new heart, out of which there come repentance, faith and a change of life!

If you have a lantern and it is dark, you may polish the outside of it as long as you like, but no light will come out of it—the first thing to be done is to put a candle inside the lantern. This is what the Lord does. And then, when He puts the candle inside the lantern, we say to ourselves, “this lantern looks very dirty, it must be cleaned.” Is it any fouler than it was before the light was put into it? It is

 exactly the same lantern, but, when you put the candle into it, you perceive how dirty it is by the light shining within. It is of no use to try to clean and polish it up till you have placed the lighted candle in it. You know how Mr. Moody puts it. A lady, we will say, takes a looking-glass and she looks into it and she sees a spot on her face. That is the use of the looking-glass—to reveal spots. But you never heard of a lady trying to wash her face with a looking-glass, for that is not its use. No, the looking-glass shows the spots, but it cannot take the spots away!

First of all, by means of the Law, we find out our spots, but we have to go to Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, to get those spots taken away! Blessed are those who have gone to Him! “He sent His Word, and healed them.” With one Word, the Lord Jesus at this hour can heal every sin-sick soul before me, for where the Word of a King is, there is power! He spoke and the heavens were of old! Let Him but speak, again, and there will be new heavens and a new earth for you. Poor Sinner, you are dead, but all that Christ did when He raised the dead in His time was to speak to them— and His Word—by these lips, through His Spirit, can raise you out of your death in sin! If you are black as the very fiend of Hell and steeped up to the throat in every infamy that God abhors, yet if His Word shall come to you, and you receive it into your soul, you shall be saved upon the spot and delivered from your destructions!

Here is a Word of the Lord. Obey it, I entreat you. “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” Here is another—listen to it, and live—“Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Let all that labor and are heavy-laden come unto Christ and He will give them rest! The Lord grant that you may come at once, without delay, and to His name shall be the praise! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 107.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 505, 597. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3070 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A VISIT TO CHRIST’S HOSPITAL  
NO. 3070

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER I2, 1907. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOL1TAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saves them out of their distresses. He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice***

***the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.” Psalm 107:17-22.***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on verses 17-20 is #1824, Volume 31—THE HISTORY OF SUNDRY FOOLS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT is a very profitable thing to visit a hospital. The sight of others’ sickness tends to make us grateful for our own health. And it is a great thing to be kept in a thankful frame of mind, for ingratitude is a spiritual disease, injurious to every power of the soul. A hospital inspection will also teach us compassion and that is of great service. Anything that softens the heart is valuable. Above all things, in these days we should strive against the petrifying influences which surround us. It is not easy for a man who has constantly enjoyed good health and prosperity, to sympathize with the poor and the suffering. Even our Great High Priest, who is full of compassion, learned it by carrying our sorrows in His own Person. To see the sufferings of the afflicted, in many cases, would be enough to move a stone. And if we visit a hospital and come back with a more tender heart, we shall have found it a sanatorium to ourselves.

I purpose, at this time, to take you to a hospital. It shall not be one of those noble institutions so pleasingly plentiful around the Tabernacle, but we will take you to Christ’s Hospital, or, as the French would call it, the Hotel Dieu. And we shall conduct you through the wards for a few minutes, trusting that while you view them, if you are yourself healed, you may feel gratitude that you have been delivered from spiritual sicknesses and an intense compassion for those who still pine and languish. May we become like our Savior who wept over Jerusalem with eyes which were no strangers to compassion’s floods. May we view the most guilty and impenitent with yearning hearts and grieve with mingled hope and anxiety over those who are under the sound of the Gospel and so are more especially patients in the Hospital of God.

We will go at once with the Psalmist to the wards of spiritual sickness. I. And first we have set out before us THE NAMES AND CHARACTERS

OF THE PATIENTS.  
You see in this hospital, written up over the head of every bed, the  
name of the patient and his disease. And you are amazed to find that all  
the patients belong to one family and, singularly enough, are all called by  
one name—and that name is very far from being a reputable one. It is a  
title that nobody covets and that many persons would be very indignant  
to have applied to them—“Fool.” All who are sick in God’s Hospital are  
fools, without exception, for this reason—that all sinners are fools. Often  
in Scripture, when David means the wicked, he says, “the foolish.” And  
in saying this, he makes no mistake, for sin is folly.  
Sin is foolish, clearly, because it is a setting up of our weakness in  
opposition to Omnipotence! Every wise man, if he must fight, will choose  
a combatant against whom he may have a chance of success. But he who  
wars with the Most High commits as gross a folly as when the moth  
contends with the flame, or the dry grass of the prairie challenges the  
fire! There is no hope for you, O sinful Man, of becoming a victor in the  
struggle! How unwise you are to take up the weapons of rebellion! And  
the folly is aggravated, because the One who is opposed is so infinitely  
good that opposition to Him is violence to everything that is just,  
beneficial and commendable! God is Love—shall I resist the Infinitely  
Loving One? He scatters blessings—should I therefore be His foe? If His  
Commandments were grievous, if His ways were ways of misery and His  
paths were paths of woe, I might have some pretense of an excuse for  
resisting His will. But O my God, so good, so kind, so boundless in  
Grace, ‘tis folly, as well as wickedness, to be Your enemy!— *“To all that’s good, averse and blind,  
But prone to all that’s ill.  
What dreadful darkness veils our mind!  
How obstinate our will!”*  
Besides this, the Laws of God are so supremely beneficial to us that  
we are our own enemies when we rebel. God’s Laws are danger signals.  
As sometimes, on the ice, those who care for human life put up the  
warning sign, “Danger,” here and there, and leave the part that is safe for  
all who choose to traverse it, so God has left us free to enjoy everything  
that is safe for us—and has only forbidden us that which is to our own  
hurt. If there is a law which forbids me to put my hand into the fire, it is  
a pity that I should need such a law, but a thousand pities more if I  
think that law a hardship! The commands of God do but forbid us to  
injure ourselves. To keep them is to keep ourselves in holy happiness—to  
break them is to bring evil of all kinds upon ourselves in soul and body.  
Why should I violate a law, which, if I were perfect, I would myself have  
made, or myself have kept finding it in force? Why need I rebel against  
that which is never exacting, never oppressive, but always conducive to  
my own highest welfare? The sinner is a fool because he is told, in God’s  
Word, that the path of evil will lead to destruction—and yet he pursues it  
with the secret hope that in his case the damage will not be very great.  
He has been warned that sin is like a cup frothing with a foam of  
sweetness, but concealing death and Hell in its dregs—yet each sinner, as he takes the cup, fascinated by the first drop, believes that to him the poisonous draught will not be fatal! How many have fondly hoped that God would lie unto men and would not fulfill His threats? Yet be assured, every sin shall have its recompense of reward! God is Just and will by no means spare the guilty. Even in this life many are feeling in their bones the consequences of their youthful lusts—they will carry to their graves the scars of their transgressions. In Hell, alas, there are millions who will forever prove that sin is an awful and an undying evil,  
an infinite curse which has destroyed them forever and ever! The sinner is a fool because while he doubts the truthfulness of God  
as to the punishment of sin, he has the conceit to imagine that  
transgression will even yield him pleasure! God says it shall be  
bitterness—the sinner denies the bitterness and affirms that it shall be  
sweetness. O Fool, to seek pleasure in sin! Go rake the morgue to find an  
immortal soul! Go walk into the secret springs of the sea to find the  
source of flame! It is not there and you can never find bliss in rebellion!  
Hundreds of thousands before you have gone upon this search and have  
all been disappointed. He is indeed a fool who must rush headlong in  
this useless chase and perish as the result! The sinner is a fool—a great  
fool—to remain as he is in danger of the wrath of God! To abide at ease in  
imminent peril and scorn the way of escape. To love the world and loathe  
the Savior. To set the present fleeting life above the eternal future. To  
choose the sand of the desert and forego the jewels of Heaven—all this is  
folly in the highest conceivable degree!  
Though all sinners are fools, yet there are fools of all sorts. Some are  
learned fools. Unconverted men, whatever they know, are only educated

fools. Between the ignorant man who cannot read a letter and the  
learned man who is apt in all knowledge, there is small difference if they  
are both ignorant of Christ! Indeed, the scholar’s folly is, in this case, the  
greater of the two! The learned fool generally proves himself the worst of  
fools, for he invents theories which would be ridiculed if they could be  
understood—and he brings forth speculations which, if judged by  
common sense and men were not turned into idiotic worshippers of  
imaginary authority, would be scouted from the universe with a hiss of  
derision! There are fools in colleges and fools in cottages.  
There are also reckless fools and reckoning fools. Some sin greedily  
with both hands. “A short life and a merry one,” is their motto—while the  
so-called “prudent” fools live more slowly, but still live not for God. These  
last, with hungry greed for wealth, will often heard up gold as if it were  
true treasure and as if anything worth the retaining were to be found  
beneath the moon. Your “prudent respectable” sinner will find himself  
just as much lost as your reckless prodigal. They must all alike seek and  
find the Savior, or be guilty of gross folly. So, alas, there are old fools as  
well as young ones! There are those who, after an experience of sin, still  
burn their fingers in it. The burnt child dreads the fire, but the burnt  
sinner lovingly plays with his sin again! Gray hair ought to be a crown of  
glory, but too often they are fool’s caps. There are young sinners who waste the prime of life when the dew is on their spirit and neglect to give their strength to God—and so miss the early joy of religion, which is the sweetest and makes all the rest of life sweeter—these are fools. But what is he who has one foot hanging over the mouth of Hell and yet continues  
without God and without Christ, a trifler with eternity?  
I have spoken thus upon the name of those who enter God’s Hospital.  
Permit me to add that all who go there and are cured, agree that this  
name is correct. Saved souls are made to feel that they are naturally  
fools and, indeed, it is one stage in the cure when men are able to spell  
their own name and when they are willing to write it in capital letters and  
say, “That is my name! If there is no other man in this world who is a  
fool, I am. I have played the fool before the living God.” This confession is  
true, for what madness it is to play the fool before the Eternal One with  
your own soul as the subject of the foolery! When men make sport, they  
generally do it with trifling things. A man who plays the fool and puts on  
a cap and bells is wise in comparison with him who sports with his God,  
his soul, Heaven and eternity! This is folly beyond all folly! Yet the sinner,  
when he is taken into God’s Hospital, will be made to feel that he has  
been such a fool and that his folly is folly with emphasis. He will confers  
that Christ must be made unto him wisdom for he by nature was born a  
fool, has lived a fool and will die a fool unless the Infinite Mercy of God  
interposes!  
II. Now, for a minute or two, let us notice THE CAUSE OF THEIR  
PAINS AND AFFLICTIONS. “Fools because of their transgression and  
because of their iniquities, are afflicted.”  
The physician usually tries to find out the root and cause of the  
disease he has to deal with. Now those souls that are brought into grief  
for sin, those who are smarting through the Providential dealings of God,  
through the striking of conscience, or the smiting of the Holy Spirit, are  
here taught that the source of their sorrow is their sin. These sins are  
mentioned in the text in the plural—“Fools because of their transgression  
and because of their iniquities.” How many have our sins been? Who  
shall count them? Let him count the hairs of his head first. Sins are  
various and are, therefore, called “transgressions and iniquities.” We do  
not all sin alike, nor does any one man sin alike at all times. We commit  
sins of word, thought, deed—against God, against men, against our  
bodies, against our souls, against the Gospel, against the Law, against  
the week-day duties, against the Sabbath privileges—of all sorts and  
these all lie at the root of our sorrows. Our sins also are aggravated. Not  
content with transgression, we have added iniquities to it. No one is more  
greedy than a sinner, but he is greedy after his own destruction! He is  
never content with revolting—he must rebel yet more and more. As when  
a stone is rolled downhill, its pace is accelerated the further it goes, so is  
it with the sinner—he goes from bad to worse.  
Perhaps I speak to some who have lately come into God’s Hospital. I  
will suppose a case. You are poor, very poor. But your poverty is the fruit  
of your profligate habits. Poverty is often directly traceable to  
drunkenness, laziness, or dishonesty. All poverty does not come from these sources. Blessed be God, there are thousands of the poor who are the excellent of the earth—and a great many of them are serving God right nobly! But I am now speaking of certain cases and probably you know of such yourselves where, because of their transgression and iniquities, men are brought to need. There will come to me, sometimes, a person who was in good circumstances a few years ago, who is now without anything but the clothes he tries to stand upright in. And his wretchedness is entirely owing to his playing the prodigal. He is one of  
those whom I trust God may yet take into His Hospital.  
At times the disease breaks out in another sort of misery. Some sins  
bring into the flesh itself pains which are anticipatory of Hell—yet even  
these persons may be taken into the Hospital of God, though they are  
afflicted to their shame through gross transgression. Oh, how many there  
are in this great city of London, of men and women who dare not tell  
their condition, but whose story is a terrible one, indeed, as God reads it!  
Oh, that He may have pity upon them and take them into His hospital  
and heal them through His abundant Grace!  
In more numerous cases, the misery brought by sin is mental. Many  
are brought very low by sin—even to despair. Conscience pricks them.  
Fears of death and Hell haunt them. I remember well when I was in this  
way myself. When I, poor fool, because of my transgression and my  
iniquities, was sorely bowed in spirit. By day I thought of the punishment  
of my sin. By night I dreamed of it. I woke in the morning with a burden  
on my heart—a burden which I could neither carry nor shake off—and  
sin was at the bottom of my sorrow. My sin, my sin, my sin—this was my  
constant plague! I was in my youth and in the heyday of my spirit. I had  
all earthly comforts and I had friends to cheer me, but they were all as  
nothing. I would seek solitary places to search the Scriptures and to read  
such books as Baxter’s Call to the Unconverted and Alleine’s Alarm,  
feeling my soul plowed more and more, as though the Law, with its ten  
great black horses, was dragging the plow up and down my soul  
breaking, crushing, furrowing my heart—and all for sin. Let me tell you,  
though we read of the cruelties of the Inquisition and the sufferings  
which the martyrs have borne from cruel men—no racks, nor fire pans,  
nor other instruments of torture can make a man so wretched as his own  
conscience when he is stretched upon its rack!  
Here then, we see both the fools and the cause of their disease. III. Now let us notice THE PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE. It is said  
that “their soul abhors all manner of meat,” like persons who have lost  
their appetite and can eat nothing—“and they draw near unto the gates  
of death”—they are given over and nearly dead.  
These words may reach some whose disease of sin has developed itself  
into fearful sorrow so that they are near unable to find comfort in  
anything. You used to enjoy the theater—you went lately but you were  
wretched there. You used to be a wit in society and set the table on a  
roar with your jokes—but you cannot joke now. They say you are  
melancholy, but you know what they do not know, for a secret arrow rankles in your bosom. You go to a place of worship, but you find no comfort even there. The manner of meat that is served to God’s saints is not suitable to you. You cry, “Alas, I am not worthy of it!” Whenever you hear a sermon thundering against the ungodly, you feel, “Ah, that is for me!” But when it comes to, “Comfort you, comfort you My people,” you conclude, “Ah, that is not for me!” Even if it is an invitation to the sinner, you say, “But I do not feel myself a sinner. I am not such an one as may come to Christ. Surely I am a castaway.” Your soul abhors all manner of meat, even that out of God’s kitchen. Not only are you dissatisfied with the world’s dainties, but the marrow and fatness of Christ, Himself, you  
cannot relish. Many of us have been in this way before you. The text adds, “They draw near unto the gates of death.” The soul is  
exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and feels that it cannot bear up  
much longer. I remember once, in the bitterness of my spirit, using those  
words of Job, “My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life,”  
for the wretchedness of a sin-burdened soul is intolerable. All do not  
suffer like strong convictions but in some it bows the spirit almost to the  
grave! Perhaps, my Friend, you see no hope whatever. You are ready to  
say, “There cannot be any hope for me. I have made a covenant with  
death and a league with Hell. I am past hope. There were, years ago,  
opportunities for me, and I was near the Kingdom of God, but like the  
man who put his hand to the plow and then looked back, I have proven  
myself unworthy of eternal life.” Troubled Heart, I am sent with a  
message for you—“Thus says the Lord, your covenant with death shall be  
disannulled and your league with Hell shall not stand. The prey shall be  
taken from the mighty and the lawful captive shall be delivered.” You  
may abhor the very meat that would restore you to strength, but He who  
understands the human heart knows how to give you better tastes and

cure these evil whims! He knows how to bring you up from the gates of  
death to the gates of Heaven! Thus we see how terribly the mischief  
progresses—  
“Our **beauty and our strength are fled,  
And we draw near to death,  
But Christ the Lord recalls the dead  
With His almighty breath.”**  
IV. And now the disease takes a turn. Our fourth point is THE  
INTERPOSITION OF THE PHYSICIAN. “Then they cry unto the Lord in  
their trouble, and He saves them out of their distresses. He sent His  
Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” The Good Physician is the true Healer. Observe when the Physician  
comes in—when “they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” When they cry,  
the Physician has come! I will not say that He has come because they  
cry, though that would be true—but there is deeper truth still—they  
cried because He came! For whenever a soul truly cries unto God, God  
has already blessed it by enabling it to cry. You would never have begun  
to pray if the Lord had not taught you. God is visiting a soul and healing  
it when it has enough faith in God to cast itself, with a cry, upon His  
mercy! I cannot hope that there is a work of Grace in you until I know that you pray. Ananias would not have believed that Paul was converted  
had it not been said, “Behold he prays!”  
Note the kind of prayer here. It was not taken out of a book and it was  
not a fine prayer in language, whether extempore or composed—it was a  
cry. You do not need to teach your children how to cry—it is the first  
thing a new-born child does. It needs no schoolmaster to teach it that  
art! Our School Boards have a great deal to teach the children of London,  
but they need never have a department for instruction in crying. A  
spiritual cry is the call of the new-born nature expressing conscious  
need. “How shall I pray?” says one. Pour your heart out, Brother. Turn  
the vessel upside down and let the contents run out to the last dreg as  
best they can. “But I cannot pray,” says one. Tell the Lord you cannot  
pray and ask Him to help you pray and you have already prayed! “Oh,  
but I don’t feel as I should!” Then confess to the Lord your sinful  
insensibility and ask Him to make your heart tender and you are already  
in a measure softened! Those who say, “We don’t feel as we should,” are  
very often those who feel the most. Whether it is so or not, cry. If you are  
a sin-sick soul, you can do nothing towards your own healing but this—  
you can cry. He who hears your cries will know what they mean. When  
the surgeon goes to the battlefield after a conflict, he is guided to his  
compassionate work by the groans of the wounded. When he hears a  
soldier’s cry, he does not inquire, “Was that a Frenchman or a German,  
and what does he mean?” A cry is good French and excellent German,  
too! It is part of the universal tongue. The surgeon understands it and  
looks for the sick man. And whatever language you use, O Sinner,  
uncouth or refined, if it is the language of your heart, God understands  
you without an interpreter!  
Note well that as we have seen when the Physician interposed, we  
shall see next what He did. He saved them out of their distresses, healed  
them and delivered them from their destructions! Oh, the Infinite Mercy  
of God! He reveals to the heart pardon for all sin and, by His Holy Spirit’s  
power, removes all our weaknesses. I tell you, Soul, though you are at  
death’s door this moment, God can even now gloriously deliver you! It  
would be a wonder if your poor burdened spirit should, within this hour,  
leap for joy and yet, if the Lord shall visit you in mercy, you will do so! I  
fall back upon my own recollection. My escape from despondency was  
instantaneous. I did but believe Jesus Christ’s word and rest upon His  
Sacrifice and the night of my heart was over—the darkness had passed  
and the true light had shone! In some parts of the world there are not  
long twilights before the break of day—the sun leaps up in a moment.  
The darkness flies and the light reigns—so it is with many of the Lord’s  
redeemed. As in a moment, their ashes are exchanged for beauty and  
their spirit of heaviness for the garment of praise! Faith is the great  
transformer! Will you cast yourself, now, whether you shall live or die,  
upon the precious blood and merits of Jesus Christ the Savior? Will you  
come and rest your soul upon the Son of God? As you do so, you are  
saved! Your sins, which are many, are now forgiven you! As of old the Egyptians were drowned in a moment in the Red Sea, and the depths had covered them so that there was not one of them left, so the moment you believe, you have lifted a mightier rod than that of Moses! And the sea of the atoning blood, in the fullness of its strength, has gone over the heads of all your enemies—your sins are drowned in Jesus’ blood! Oh, what joy is this when, in answer to a cry, God delivers us from our  
present distresses and our threatened future destructions!  
But how is this effected? The Psalmist says, “He sent His Word and  
healed them.” “His Word.” How God enables language when He uses it!  
That word, “Word,” is lifted up in Scripture into the foremost place and  
put on a level with the Godhead. “THE WORD.” It indicates a God-like  
Personage for, “in the beginning was the Word.” No, it denotes God  
Himself, for, “the Word was God.” Our hope is the Word—the Incarnate  
Logos, the Eternal Word. In some respects, our salvation comes to us  
entirely through the sending of that Word to be made flesh and to dwell  
among us. He is our saving health—by His stripes we are healed. But  
here the expression is best understood of the Gospel, which is the Word  
of God. Often the reading of the Scriptures proves the means of healing  
troubled souls or else that same Word is made effectual when spoken  
from a loving heart with living lips. What might there is in the plain  
preaching of the Gospel! No power in all the world can match it. They tell  
us, nowadays, that the nation will go over to Rome and the Gospel candle  
will be blown out. I am not a believer in these alarming prophecies. I  
neither believe in the battle of Dorking, nor in the victory of Pius the  
Ninth. Leave us our Bibles, our pulpits and our God, and we shall win  
the victory! Oh, if all ministers preached the Gospel plainly, without  
aiming at rhetoric and high flights of oratory, what great triumphs would  
follow! How sharp would the Gospel sword prove itself to be if men would  
but pull it out of those fine ornamental, but useless scabbards! When the  
Lord enables His servants to put plain Gospel truth into language that  
will strike and stick, be understood and retained, it heals sick souls that  
otherwise might have lain fainting a long time!  
Still, the Word of God in the Bible and the Word of God preached  
cannot heal the soul unless God shall send it in the most emphatic  
sense. “He sent His Word.” When the eternal Spirit brings home the Word  
with power, what a Word it is! Then the miracles of Grace worked within  
us are such as to astonish friends and confound foes! May the Lord, even  
now, send His Word to each sinner and it will be his salvation! “Hear,  
and your soul shall live.” “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the  
Word of God.” And faith brings with it all that the soul requires. When we  
have faith, we are linked with Christ and so our salvation is ensured. V. That brings us to the last point—THE CONSEQUENT CONDUCT  
OF THOSE WHO WERE HEALED.  
First, they praised God for His goodness. What rare praise a soul offers  
where it is brought out of prison! The sweetest music ever heard on earth  
is found in those new songs which celebrate our recent deliverance from  
the horrible pit and the miry clay. Did you ever keep a sparrow in a cage  
and then think that it was cruel to rob it of its liberty? Did you take it out into the garden and open the cage door? Oh, but if you could have heard it sing when it had escaped from the cage where it had been so long, you would have heard the best sparrow music in all the woods! When a poor soul breaks forth from the dungeon of despair, set free by God, what songs it pours forth! God loves to hear such music. Remember that ancient Word of His, “I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.” God loves the warm-hearted praises of newly-emancipated souls and He  
will get some out of you, dear Friend, if you are set free at this hour! Notice that these healed ones praised God especially for His goodness.  
It was great goodness that such as they were should be saved. So near  
death’s door and yet saved! They wondered at His mercy and sang of “His  
wonderful works to the children of men.” It is wonderful that such as we  
were should be redeemed from our iniquities, but our Redeemer’s name  
is called Wonderful, and He delights in showing forth the riches of His  
Grace.  
Observe that in their praises they ascribe all to God—they praise Him  
for His wonderful work. Salvation is God’s work, from beginning to end.  
Their song is, moreover, comprehensive, and they adore the Lord for His  
love to others as well as to themselves—they praise Him “for His  
wonderful works to the children of men.”  
Forget not that they added to this praise, sacrifice. “Let them sacrifice  
the sacrifices of thanksgiving.” What shall be the sacrifices of a sinner  
delivered from going down into the Pit? Shall he bring a bull that has  
horns and hoofs? No, let him bring his heart! Let him offer himself, his  
time, his talents, his body, his soul, his substance. Let him exclaim, “Let  
my Lord take all, seeing that He has saved my soul.” Will you not lay  
yourselves out for Him who laid Himself out for you? If He has bought  
you with such a price, confess that you are altogether His! Of your  
substance give to His cause. As He prospers you, prove that you are  
really His by your generosity towards His Church and His poor! In addition to sacrifice, the healed ones began to offer songs, for it was  
to be a “sacrifice of thanksgiving.” May those of you who are pardoned  
sing more than is customary nowadays. May we, each one of us, who

have been delivered from going down to the Pit, enter into the choir of  
God’s praising ones—vocally singing as often as we can—and in our  
hearts always chanting His praise!  
Once more, the grateful ones were to add to their gifts and Psalms, a  
declaration of joy at what God had done for them. “Let them declare His  
works with rejoicing.” You who are pardoned should tell the Church of  
the Lord’s mercy to you. Let His people know that God is discovering His  
hidden ones. Come and tell the minister. Nothing gladdens him so much  
as to know that souls are brought to Jesus by his means. This is our  
reward. You are our crown of rejoicing, you saved ones! I can truly say  
that I never have such joy as when I receive letters from persons, or hear  
from them personally the good news, “I heard you on such-and-such a  
night and found peace.” Or, “I read your sermon and God blessed it to my soul.” There is not a true minister of Christ but would willingly lay himself down to die if he could thereby see multitudes saved from eternal wrath! We live for this. If we miss this, our life is a failure. What is the use of a minister unless he brings souls to God? For this we would yearn over you and draw near unto God in secret, that He would be pleased in  
mercy to deliver you!  
But, surely, if you are converted, you should not conceal the fact! It is  
an unkind action for any person who has received life from the dead  
through any instrumentality to deny the worker the consolation of  
hearing that he has been made useful—for the servant of God has many  
discouragements and he is, himself, readily cast down. And the gratitude  
of those who are saved is one of the appointed cordials for his heavy  
heart. There is no refreshment like it! May God grant you Grace to  
declare His love, for our sake, for the Church’s sake and, indeed, for the  
world’s sake! Let the sinner know that you have found mercy—perhaps it  
will induce him, also, to seek salvation. Many a physician has gained his  
practice by one patient telling others of his cure. Tell your neighbors that  
you have been to the Hospital of Jesus and been restored, though you  
hated all manner of meat and drew near to the gates of death! And  
maybe a poor soul in the same condition as yourself will say, “This is a  
message from God to me.”  
Above all, publish abroad the Lord’s goodness for Jesus’ sake. He  
deserves your honor. Will you receive His blessing and then, like the nine  
lepers, give Him no praise? Will you be like the woman in the crowd who  
was healed by touching the hem of His garment and then would gladly  
have slipped away? If so, I pray that the Master may say, “Somebody has  
touched Me,” and may you be compelled to tell us all the truth and say,  
“I was sorely sick in soul, but I touched You, O my blessed Lord, and I  
am saved! And to the praise of the glory of Your Grace I will tell it! I will  
tell it though devils should hear me! I will tell it and make the world ring  
with it according to my ability, to the praise and Glory of Your saving  
Grace!”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 107:1-22.**

Verse 1. O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever. In the heading of this Psalm we are reminded that the Psalmist here exhorts the redeemed, in praising God, to observe His manifold Providence over travelers, prisoners, sick men, seamen “and in divers varieties of life.” But, inasmuch as the exhortation is especially addressed to the redeemed of the Lord, I shall endeavor to cast the red ray of redemption over it and to explain these various circumstances as relating to the spiritual experience of God’s people and to their deliverance out of divers perils to which their souls are exposed.

“O give thanks unto the Lord.” This seems to imply that we are so slow to praise God that we have to be stirred up to this sacred duty! This exhortation looks as if we needed to be entreated to give thanks unto the Lord. Yet this ought not to be an uncongenial or disagreeable task. It ought to be our pleasure to praise the Lord. We should be eager to do it and yet it is to be feared that we are often silent when we ought to be giving thanks unto His holy name. “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.” Whether you give Him your praises, or—

*“Let His mercies lie  
Forgotten in unthankfulness,  
And without praises die”—*

He deserves them, “for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.” 2, 3. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed  
from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands from the  
east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. Whenever  
God’s people are redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered  
unto Himself, it is always by His Grace and power. They are not only  
gathered to Him, but they are gathered by Him and, therefore, let them  
all praise His holy name!  
4. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no  
city to dwell in. This is the experience of all God’s redeemed and gathered  
ones—they were, at one time, all lost and wandering to and fro in the  
wilderness—as God’s ancient people did.  
5, 6*.*Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried  
unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their  
distresses. This is the point to which a true spiritual experience sooner  
or later brings all God’s elect ones! They cry unto the Lord in their  
trouble. The end, the design of their trouble is that they may cry unto  
Him! And when they do so, it is absolutely certain that they shall be  
delivered out of their distresses.  
7-11. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a  
city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness,  
and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the  
longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness. Such as sit in  
darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;  
because they rebelled against the words of God, and despised the counsel  
of the Most High. All God’s people, all His redeemed have been made to  
feel, in a greater or lesser degree, the agony of their spiritual bondage.  
They have been like captives sitting in darkness, dreading death,  
realizing that they are utterly unable to deliver themselves. They have  
been rebellious against the words of God, and have despised His counsel,  
so that it is absolutely necessary that they should be brought to their  
right position and be made to kneel before the Lord in true humility of  
heart.  
12-16. Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell  
down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their  
trouble. and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of  
darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bonds in sunder. Oh  
that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful  
works to the children of men! For He has broken the gates of brass, and  
cut the bars of iron in sunder. Is any child of God thus shut up in the dark? Those of you who have ever been lost in a London fog know what a depression of spirit it brings upon you while you are in the impenetrable darkness out of which you cannot see any way of escape. All that you can do is to stand still and cry out for help. Well, try what crying to God will do for you in your spiritual depression! Your spirit is cast down into the very deeps—then, out of the depths cry unto the Lord as Jonah did! Rest in Him! Trust in Him, and see whether He will not bring you up into  
the light of His Countenance!  
17, 18. Fools because of their transgression, and because of their  
iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they  
draw near unto the gates of death. All God’s redeemed people have  
suffered from soul-sickness and some of them have suffered from it so  
acutely that they have lost all appetite for spiritual comfort. “Their soul  
abhors all manner of meat.” They cannot bear the sight or the thought of  
it. A man in this condition says, “Do not bring me any food. I loathe it.”  
The very nourishment that might have restored him, he rejects because  
of the nausea which soul-sickness brings.  
19, 20. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saves  
them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them, and  
delivered them from their destructions. He healed them with His Word.  
And there is a remedy, in God’s Word, for every form of spiritual malady.  
What we need to know is where the particular remedy for our special  
form of soul-sickness is to be found—and this, the Holy Spirit will teach  
us if we will but ask Him!  
21, 22. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for  
His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the  
sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. [Expositions

of the later verses of this Psalm were published with Sermons #3061—THE RULE OF GRACE and 3064—“AD IT WAS SO” both Volume 53—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

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SICKNESS AND PRAYER, HEALING AND PRAISE  
NO. 3274

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 20, 1865.

**“Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He saves them out of their distresses. He sent His**

**Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing” Psalm 107:17-22.**

WHEN a person is very ill, one of the greatest kindnesses that you can show to him is to tell him how you felt under a similar affliction, to what physician you resorted, what remedies he prescribed, through what processes you passed, what were the symptoms connected with your recovery and how long you have been able to rejoice over the cure which has been worked in you. This kind of practical, experimental talk will be far more valuable to him than any doctor’s opinions that you may read to him out of a book of medicine. Tell the sufferer what your experience has been and you will generally find that he will attach more importance to that than to any theory which you may propound to him, however well you may support that theory by argument!

I propose, this evening, as God shall enable me, to give you some of my experience. Indeed, I think that what I shall have to say will describe the experience of most of those who have been led to understand their state as spiritually sick, and who have been guided to the Great Physician and have found out how He works a complete and permanent cure. I have no doubt that this Psalm refers to actual bodily sickness and that it teaches us that we ought to praise the Lord very heartily whenever we are restored from any illness. It is no small mercy to have life preserved and health restored, especially if the end of life would be to us the beginning of eternal death and that our soul, when separated from the body, would have no “better land” to enter, and no right to a place in the home of the blessed where sickness is unknown! But while I think that the Psalm refers to bodily sickness, I am fully persuaded that it also applies to spiritual sickness and that we shall act in accordance with the mind of the Spirit if we consider the text as first, describing the spiritually sick.

Then, as showing the means by which they are cured. And lastly, as revealing what they do after they are cured.

I. So, first, we have in the text A DESCRIPTION OF THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY SICK.  
First, we are told their name. It is not a complimentary one—“Fools.” But it is a name which they richly deserve! At least I know that I deserved it when I was in their case. God never calls a man a fool unless he is one. Why, then, are unconverted sinners rightly called fools?  
They are fools because they prefer the shadow to the substance. They are as foolish as the dog in the old fable who dropped the solid meat that he had in his mouth and tried to seize the shadow of it that he saw reflected in the water. And men are indeed fools when they prefer the shadows of time to the substances of eternity!  
They are fools, next, many of them, because they say that this world grew up by chance. “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.” He said that because he was a fool—if he had not been a fool, he would neither have thought it nor said it. If I were to assert that this Tabernacle grew up by chance, without either architect or builder, I would be a liar as well as a fool! But I should have just as much reason to say that as to declare that the universe came into existence without the fiat of the great Creator. Men who deny the plain teaching of Scripture upon this point are indeed fools!  
They are fools, too, because they make a mockery of sin. If men cut their fingers by playing with edged tools. If they put red-hot coals into their bosom, or fling firebrands about and say that they do it for fun, truly they are fools! But they are not such mad fools as those who play with sin and so ruin their souls forever, or who put into their lives sins that are like hot coals of juniper—and then laugh as though they had done a wise thing. They are indeed fools who prefer the pleasures of sin to the joys of eternity, for such pleasures will soon end—and then everlasting misery will be their portion. If you want to know how foolish they really are, you must view their folly in the light of eternity. Look down upon them from the heights of the Heaven which they appear so willing to lose, or try to imagine the depths and woes of the Hell which they seem determined to inherit, and you will straightway discover what fools they are! They think nothing of their never-dying souls, but Christ thought so much of immortal beings that He left Heaven with all its glories and endured suffering and shame of the most fearful character that He might deliver souls from going down into the Pit of woe forever!  
The text does not say that they are fools who are short of wit as we generally use that term, but it refers to those who are short of heavenly wit. They are fools who are deficient in common sense, for it is certainly in accordance with common sense that I should look first to that which is of the greatest importance—that is to say, my soul and the position it is to occupy throughout eternity when this mortal life is ended. Whoever you may be, my Friend, though some may call you wise, and though you think yourself wise, if you have not seen that all is right with you for eternity, God calls you a fool—and I dare not call you anything else! You may be a master of mathematics, but if you have not solved this great problem, “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” you are what God says you are—a fool!  
But the test goes on to tell us that these fools fall sick—and that is a cause for devout thankfulness, for if they never feel sick, they would never get well—and the sickness which I am about to describe is one which leads to everlasting health! What is the cause of the sickness which comes upon these fools? The text says, “Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.” “Transgression” is crossing over the line which God has laid down in His Word. “Iniquity” is a lack of equity, a lack of that “right spirit” which God alone can give, and without which right words and actions are impossible. Well do I remember when I was spiritually sick because of my transgressions and iniquities. I could not sleep in peace, for I remembered that I had provoked God to anger by my sins. I had not loved Him with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. I had set up my will against His will and so I had insulted Him to His face. I felt not only that I was condemned by God, but my own conscience joined in the condemnation! As I read the whole Law of the Lord through and remembered how Christ interpreted and applied it, I felt sick at heart, and the conviction burned itself into my soul with all the force of a raging fever—that all the Ten Commandments would be swift and sure witnesses against me at the Judgment Bar of God! It must be a terrible thing to stand in front of a row of soldiers, knowing that every one of their rifles contains a bullet that is meant for your heart, but the condemnation of a sin-burdened conscience is worse than that! The ten great guns of the Law of God are all aimed at the poor sinner and there he stands, dreading the doom that he knows he deserves, for the Justice of God has but to lift its finger and swift and awful would be the punishment which his sin would bring upon him!  
I can bear my testimony that there is no sickness that is so hard to bear as the sickness that is caused by sin. You may get a little rest now and then in almost every other form of affliction, but you cannot get any rest when you are suffering from this spiritual malady! “Day and night,” said David, “Your hand was heavy upon me.” So it is not at all surprising that he added, “my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” This sickness because of sin is one that no human physician can cure and no earthly medicine can even alleviate! When suffering thus, the soul can find no comfort—often, not even in the Word, itself! Yet, if there are any here who are sick in this way, let me say that I am glad that they are thus afflicted, for this is a sickness of which souls do not eternally die—it is a sickness which ends in everlasting health! So I pray with all my heart that we may all fall sick of it—and then that Jehovah-Rophi may come and cure us as only He can!  
There is one special symptom of this soul-sickness to which the text directs our attention—“Their soul abhors all manner of meat.” Here comes the world’s waiter bearing a dainty dish in his hand. As he lifts the cover, the sinner recognizes its contents and remembers how he has relished such food in the past. But when he tastes it, he cannot tell why, but he feels an utter revulsion to it! That which once seemed so savory is now quite nauseous to him! “Take it away,” he cries. “I am sick of the very sight of it!” Then the waiter brings in something that is more highly spiced and sets it before him, but when he has tried it, he says, “I do not see why people are so fond of such fare as this! To me it is utterly flavorless and insipid.” One brings him the fare that is provided at the theater, another tries to tempt his appetite with innocent pleasantries, a third tries the seductions of immoral amusements, but to the whole set of them he cries, “Get you gone, every one of you! Not one of you can bring me anything to suit my palate.” He finds fault with everything that is offered to him! The fact is, his mouth is out of taste for all such dainties, as some call them. It is a blessed thing to have no liking for such fare as the world can set before you, for those who are satisfied with such food as that will find that they have to digest it in Hell—and long enough will they be in doing so! There may be some in this building, tonight, who have lost their taste for things that once charmed them. You do not know how it is, but somehow or other, you cannot get on with the company in which you used to feel quite at home. The amusements which once delighted you seem, now, to be so frivolous and senseless that you wonder how you could ever have been allured by them. The explanation is that you are now like those of whom our text speaks—“Their soul abhors all manner of meat.”  
The worst of it is that people in this state of mind and heart abhor the good meat as well as the bad—“their soul abhors all manner of meat”— the good meat of the Gospel as well as the tainted viands of the world. Many a time I have acted as a cook and I have tried to tempt these sinsick folk with what I reckoned to be most delicious fare—food which I had myself tasted first and found it to be most palatable and nourishing. But when I have set it before them, they have turned away from it and said, “No, no, that is not for us—we cannot relish such fare as that.” I have preached concerning the abounding mercy of God, but the sinner has said, “There is no mercy for me.” I have talked of the power of Jesus’ precious blood, but the sinner has said, “It will never cleanse

 me.” I have spoken of the prevalence of believing prayer, but the poor man has shaken his head and despairingly cried, “I cannot pray!” I have told him that Christ is willing and waiting to receive all who come to Him, but he only turned his face to the wall and said, “I cannot come to Christ, and I never shall come to Him. I know that I am a condemned man.” I have brought out the promises and set them in a dish garnished with Gospel invitations, but his soul has abhorred all manner of meat. The fault is not with the meat, but with the sinner’s mouth—the provision is good, yet his soul abhors it!  
I recollect the time when I used to come out of every House of Prayer feeling worse than when I entered it. I used to read Baxter’s Saint’s Rest, Alleine’s Alarm to the Unconverted, Bunyan’s Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, and other books of the same sort—but often, when I shut them up, I wished I had never opened them! I read the Bible most diligently, but the choicest passages in it only made me cry, “Ah, it is a most blessed Book for other people, but it is not for me.” I was in the condition described by the text and my soul abhorred all manner of food, even the very best!  
The text also tells us the extent to which this soul-sickness had gone— “they draw near unto the gates of death.” Ah, poor Soul, is not this a true portrait of you? You think that your death warrant has been signed by your God, that you are shut up in the condemned cell and that you can hear the carpenters at work making the scaffold ready for your execution! In imagination you have been already shackled, you have gone up the fatal stairs, the cap has been drawn over your face, you are standing upon the drop and to your own apprehension you are about to be launched into Hell! This shows how sick you are, but while I am moved to pity as I see how you are suffering, I am thankful that your present pains are of so salutary a character and that they will prove to be for your lasting good! I can even clap my hands for joy that you are brought so low as to draw never to the gates of Death, for my hope is that you will soon be brought near to the gate of Everlasting Life! Now that God has brought you down, He will soon bring you up, for it is as Hannah sang, “The Lord kills and makes alive: He brings down to the grave, and brings up.” Therefore be of good courage even though your soul is in such a sad and desperate state!  
II. Now, secondly, let us consider the text as SHOWING THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE FOLKS ARE CURED.  
First, they call for the aid of the Great Physician. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” Now that they are brought so near to the gates of Death that there is no hope of their recovery unless God Himself interposes on their behalf, “they cry unto the Lord.” I have known some who when they have got to their most desperate state, have been afraid to call upon God to help them. “How can I pray, now,” one asks, “when I never prayed before?” That is all the greater reason, my Friend, why you should begin to pray now! You need not even bend the knee, but let your heart go up to God in prayer just where you are now sitting or standing. “But,” says another, “if I were to pray, it would only be through fear of Hell. Poor Soul, do not be too particular about your reasons for praying! Cry from your very soul, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and God will hear you and have mercy upon you! I doubt not that many have come to God first through fear of Hell, and afterwards they have learned the attractive power of the love of God in Christ Jesus. If you go to Christ, He will in no wise cast you out!  
“But my prayer would be such a selfish one! I could only ask that I might be saved.” Well, and what then? For whose sake did the prodigal go back to his father? And did his father refuse to receive him because it was a selfish motive that made him return? He said, “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” It was a mere bread and cheese motive that took him back from the far country, but his father’s welcome was none the less hearty to the returning prodigal! I never send for a doctor except from the most selfish motive—I do it for my own good, not for his! And so it must be with you. Cry to the Great Physician because you need Him to cure you. You will think more of His honor and Glory after He has cured you, but for the present, be selfish enough to cry, “Lord, save me, or I perish!”  
“But I have tried everyone else, first, so I cannot expect God to attend to me after that.” Ah, but God’s ways are not like man’s! If you had been round to every other shop, first, an ordinary tradesman might refuse to serve you, but God does not deal with sinners in such a fashion as that! Though you have tried the Law of God and tried your own good works, and tried all sorts of human inventions—and all have failed you, cry now to your God! “Better late than never.”All that you have yet done is but part of your disease, so go to your God and confess it, mourn over it before Him and he will tell you that all your sins are forgiven you for His dear Son’s sake because He took your place and suffered in your place when He died, “the Just for the unjust,” to bring you to God!  
“But I cannot pray,” says one. Then do not try to pray, but simply cry to God as they did in the Psalmist’s day. Crying is the most natural expression of human needs. I expect you have learned that your child manages very early in life to let you know what he wants—he does not say, “Father, teach me a little phrase that I may say every morning when I want my breakfast.” How soon a little child in pain will let you know that something is the matter! He will cry all over—head, hands, feet and his whole body will be in such a state of agitation that you will run to his relief! And that is the way to cry to God in your trouble. If your tongue cannot express your needs, let your bended knees, your uplifted hands and your streaming eyes and heaving bosom and aching heart all help to make up for your broken utterance! And then will the Lord speedily save you out of your distress.  
“But what is the Physician’s fee?” asks one, who has vivid memories of earthly doctors’ bills. The fee—oh, the Physician will have you, yourself, as His fee! When He heals you of your soul-sickness, He takes you to be His forever. But He wants nothing from you! Only trust Him. Only cry to Him. Then, and though your soul has abhorred all manner of meat, and you have drawn near to the gates of Death, Jehovah-Rophi will cause your disease to vanish in a moment and your soul shall rejoice in perfect restoration to health!  
I can only speak briefly upon the happy cure of the sin-sick patients by the Great Physician—“He sent His Word, and healed them.” The one remedy for sin-sick sinners is the Word of God, so let them be diligent in reading it and eager to hear it whenever they can, for, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Certain passages of Scripture will always be peculiarly precious to us, for they were the golden keys which opened the dungeons in Doubting Castle and set us at liberty. I can never forget that blessed text, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” for that was the message that brought peace to my troubled spirit! And no doubt many of you have similar memories concerning the texts which were used by God for your deliverance. It is the Word of God, applied by the Holy Spirit, that is the means of healing sin-sick souls!  
But there is a still higher meaning in this expression, for the Lord Jesus Christ is THE WORD OF GOD and it is He whom God has sent for the healing of poor sin-sick souls! He was sent by God to be the sinner’s Friend and the sinner’s Savior! He lived for sinners and He died for sinners. Listen to this good news, Sinner! You have sinned, but if you believe in Jesus, you shall no longer be regarded by God as a sinner, for Christ has borne your sins into the land of forgetfulness, as the scapegoat of old did typically for Israel! You have sinfulness still within you, but if you are truly trusting in Jesus, He will overcome your sinfulness by putting His holy fear in your heart and by causing His Spirit to subdue all your evil properties.  
Notice, too, how quick the cure is. God has but to say to the sinner, “Be you healed,” and he is healed! Just as in Creation, Jehovah said, “Let there be light: and there was light.” And just as when He was upon the earth, the Lord Jesus but spoke and blind eyes were made to see, deaf ears were made to hear, the lame were enabled to walk and even the dead were raised to life! Poor Sinner, you think that your coffin will soon be needed, but Jehovah-Jesus has but to speak the word and in an instant the flush of health shall come upon your soul and you shall be perfectly healed!  
This cure is also perfect as well as immediate, for the text says that the Lord “delivered them from their destructions,” as well as that He “saves them out of their distresses.” They are not only cured of one spiritual malady, but of all! They are delivered from the guilt, the power and the penalty of sin! And once they are really cured by Christ, there is no fear of their ever having this soul-sickness again! Let the Great Physician but speak the healing word to the sinner here who is in the most desperate condition—and in a moment that sinner shall be made whole, never to suffer in the same fashion again! Oh, that He would put forth His healing power this very moment! I can only talk, but He can act. I can only tell you how sin-sick sinners are cured, but He can cure you! Oh, that you who have been brought so low that you think you can go no lower unless you are cast into Hell, would only cry unto the Lord in your trouble and He will save you out of your distresses! He will send His Word and heal you, and deliver you from going down to destruction! God grant that it may be so, for His dear Son’s sake!

III. Now I must close by briefly reminding you of WHAT THESE SINSICK FOLKS DO AFTER THEY ARE CURED. They do what I would like to do all my life!  
First, they praise the name of the Lord. What blessed employment this is, and I think God has just cause of complaint against us that we do not praise Him more. Men of the world seem to have thoroughly learned the art of cheering themselves with song. If the woodman goes forth on a snowy morning with his axe over his shoulder, he is generally humming or whistling a merry tune. You scarcely ever see a milkmaid in the country brushing the early dew from the grass without also hearing her singing some lively strain. And the housewife, as she rocks the cradle, soothes her babe to sleep with a tuneful lullaby. The sailors an board ship never haul up the anchor or join in other heavy labor without uniting in a jovial song to help them in their task! And Christians ought to imitate them, only on a much higher scale! I think we lose a great deal through not praising God more. We need much more singing—could you not sing much more at home, at the family altar, or when you are engaged in your various occupations? It would help to bring heavenly enjoyment into your lives if you had more of this heavenly employment!  
Then, next, sin-sick souls who have been healed offer sacrifices unto the Lord—“Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving.” I do not believe you have ever been cured by Christ unless you need to do something to show how grateful you are to Him. A saved soul feels the sacred burdening of love and longs to consecrate itself and all it has to God’s Glory! And if there is one thing that is more difficult than another, the grateful soul says, “That is what I should like to do for Christ, to prove my love to Him.” Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, have you really devoted yourselves—body, soul and spirit—to Him who gave His all for you? Then prove it by your self-denial and self-sacrifice for His cause!  
Now, lastly, those who are cured by Christ “declare His works with rejoicing,” by which is meant, I suppose, that if they can preach, they are to do it “with rejoicing.” There are some preachers who seem to regard the Gospel as though it were a cup of medicine of the bitterest kind. It is true that it is a healing balm—it is a most blessed cure-all—but it is neither to be presented nor taken with a wry face as though it were some nauseous concoction of the apothecary! Whitefield began one of his discourses thus—“When I read my text, I felt inclined to sing instead of preaching to you.” That is the way to preach—with a holy joyfulness of spirit, telling your hearers that you have found the priceless Pearl and inviting them to share its preciousness with you! And you who cannot preach, can talk to one another in a similar strain—how much good can be done by a bright testimony to God’s Grace in little companies of three, four, five, or six! I thank God that many of you are not strangers to this blessed work, but I wish that more of you would get at it. How can you keep this blessed secret to yourselves? You are in a hospital full of spiritually sick folks and yet you keep to yourselves the secret of everlasting health! You are surrounded by myriads of lost souls and yet you keep to yourselves the secret of salvation! Oh, shame on you for such guilty silence! End it at once—tell the good news to someone before you go to bed tonight—and then tell it to somebody else as early as you can in the morning! And keep on telling it in season and out of season as long as you live! Let us have plenty of street-preaching, plenty of Bible-distribution, plenty of Sunday school teaching, plenty of teaching young men and women in Bible classes, plenty of everything, in fact, that will make men know what Jesus Christ can do! I would that I could whisper in the ear of everyone who has been healed, “Go, and tell your neighbor, your friend, your child, your brother, your sister, your husband, your wife what the Lord has done for you!”  
“Are we all to preach?” asks someone. Oh, no! Only you who have been healed can tell about the Good Physician’s healing power. If you are among those who are sick through sin, and sick of sin, come to Him to be healed—trust Him to save you and then—  
*“Tell to sinners round  
What a dear Savior you have found  
Point to His redeeming blood  
And say, ‘Behold the way to God.’”*  
God bless you, everyone, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 107:1-32.**

The Psalmist exhorts the redeemed in praising God, to observe the different forms of His mercy. He views the chosen people as travelers, captives, sick men and seamen. And in each of these classes he exhorts them to praise the Lord.

Verse 1. O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good. He is essentially good. His name, God, is only a shorter form of good, yet if we were to lengthen it, there could be no more goodness found in it than is found in the three letters, “God.”

1. For His mercy endures forever. That is the form which His goodness takes in relation to us, His sinful creatures. As we deserve nothing, everything that He gives us is a gift of mercy—and what a range His mercy takes! “His mercy endures forever.’’

2. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. If nobody else will say that God is good, let His redeemed ones say it! If others are silent, let them speak to His praise! If others are doubtful, let them declare positively that the Lord is good and that His mercy endures forever!

3. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west from the north, and from the south. We were scattered in various directions by our own folly and sin—

*“Each wandering in a different way,*

*But all the downward road”* —  
and He gathered us unto that blessed Shiloh of whom Jacob said, “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

4. They wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way. Ah, the way of a sinner, convicted of sin, is indeed a solitary way! He has a sorrow which he cannot tell to anybody else—a stranger intermeddles not with his grief!

4. They found no city to dwell in. There are no cities in the wilderness for people to dwell in. We look for a city that is out of sight at present—“a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Here, in this fleeting world, we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

5, 6. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. They were a long while before they prayed to the Lord, but He was not a long while before He answered their prayer! When they were brought to that, then, that is to say, when they were so hungry, and so thirsty, and so faint that they could do nothing else but cry, then, was the moment that they cried unto the Lord, “He delivered them out of their distresses.”

7. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. “He led them”...“that they might go.” The leadings of Divine Grace do not destroy the activities of the human will. God does not treat us as if we were blocks of wood or stone, but He treats us as reasonable beings.

8, 9. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness. We hardly looked for that verse to follow the preceding one! We might have thought that the Psalmist would have written, “for He brings them to a city of rest.” God always exceeds our expectations. He not only brings His wandering people home, but He feeds them bountifully when they are there! He holds high festival within Zion’s gate, and the citizens of the New Jerusalem are fed with the finest of the wheat. Surely souls so blessed must praise Jehovah for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Now comes another picture, the picture of the captives—

10, 11. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and condemned the counsel of the Most High. They “sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,” for they have lost all energy. They sit down in dumb despair, for at last their sins have found them out. They rejected God and He has left them to suffer the consequences of their sin—“being bound in affliction and iron.”

12, 13. Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble—This seems to always be the last thing that people in trouble do! Until they hunger and thirst, and their soul faints, as in the former case, or until they fall down utterly helpless, as in this case, they will not pray. But “then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble”—

13-16 . And He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. All Glory be to the great Liberator’s name! Now comes the picture of sick men, which is also the portrait of ourselves—

17. Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Perhaps affliction comes to their bodies, but more especially it attacks their hearts—they have heart disease, a mortal tremor within, or a terrible fever of fear.

18. Their soul abhors all manner of meat. You cannot comfort them, they cannot or will not receive the Truth of God that would sustain them—they have lost all appetite for spiritual food.

18. And they draw near unto the gates of death. They seem to come close to those great iron gates that shut out all hope forever! They can hear them grind upon their massive hinges—they begin to realize what the wrath of God means.

19. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble. Fools though they are, they have sense enough to do this!

19. And He saves them out of their distresses. So that a true prayer from one who is near unto the gates of death is a prevailing prayer! We earnestly urge all to repent long before they come to a dying bed, but if they are on a dying bed—if they are literally near unto the gates of death—here is evidence that if they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, He will not close His ears or His heart to their prayer!  
20. He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. The Word of God has a sort of Omnipotent power in it. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and by the Word of the

Lord are sick [See Sermons #1992, Volume 33—SONG FOR THE FREE—HOPE FOR THE BOUND; #1824, Volume 31—THE HISTORY OF SUNDRY FOOLS and #2921, Volume 51—AN OLDFASHIONED REMEDY—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] souls healed. That Word can do anything that God purposes. “Where the word of a king is, there is power,” but where the Word of God is, there is Omnipotence!

21, 22. Oh that man would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. Now we come to the seafaring men—

23, 24. They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep. These words literally apply not only to seamen, but also to others who are called to endure great storms while sailing across the sea of this mortal life.

25, 26. For He commands, and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. For even he who has his “sea legs” on, finds them of little use to him when such a storm as this is tossing everything in a dreadful hurly burly. “They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths,” and this experience is repeated, perhaps, hundreds of times, day and night, sometimes for weeks together!

27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like drunken men, and are at their wit’s end. But, oh, when souls are caught in a storm of conviction of sin, this is a true description of their spiritual distress—they are at their wits end and do not know what to do! Everything about them is shaking, and they are reeling to and fro, sometimes this way and sometimes that— staggering, scarcely able to believe anything, seeing some things double and everything out of place!

28. Then they cry—Yes, then, when they are reeling and staggering! That is a strange condition—is it not—in which to be praying, reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man? “Then they cry”—

28. Unto the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. Then God will hear the prayer of a staggering man, and the prayer that has not any sense in it because the man who prays is at his wit’s end! By “sense” I mean not following the consecutiveness of an orderly petition—the prayer itself seeming to reel to and fro. The suppliant is so overpowered by sorrow that he might be thought to be drunk—as she was to whom Eli so harshly spoke bidding her put away her wine from her, whereas she was overcome by sorrow. God hears us when we cannot hear ourselves pray and when we cannot put the words of our supplication in proper order. God knows what we mean to say and gives us what we really need.

29. He makes the storm a calm—What a change! And what a blessing it is to get into one of God’s calms, for they are far beyond the ordinary calm of nature! Then do we enjoy “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.”

29-32 . So that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quiet; so He brings them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2921 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

AN OLD-FASHIONED REMEDY  
NO. 2921

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 29, 1876.

**“He sent His Word and healed them.”  
Psalm 107:20.**

THE healing of natural sickness is not accomplished without the power of God. Vain were the skill of the most learned physician unless the God of Nature cooperated with the medicine. If any of you have been restored of late from sickness, I charge you to praise God for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. Remember your weary nights. Remember your painful days. Call to mind the vows of your soul in anguish and take care that you play not false to God. In the day of your health, be true to the promises made on your sickbed. Let the song of gratitude go up from your heart and from your lips—and let the life which He has so graciously preserved be dedicated to His service. It ought to be so. God help you that it may be so.

However, the Psalm is intended to speak of spiritual things and so, tonight, we shall apply our text to the disorders of the mind—the diseases of the heart. There are some here present who have felt that worst of sicknesses—a sick heart—and many of us, blessed be God, have received that best of healing, the healing of the mind! They can praise God tonight while we speak of this precious fact—“He sent His Word and healed them.”

Just in a few strokes let me sketch the patient in his extremity and then at length let me describe the cure in its simplicity. “He sent His Word and healed them.”

I. First, let us give the sketch of THE PATIENT IN HIS EXTREMITY. I hope he will see himself as in a glass and say, “That is myself.”  
The first thing about him is that he is a fool. Turn to the 17th verse. “Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted.” It is insulting to a man to call him a fool, but I question whether any man is saved unless he has called himself a fool! “Fool,” says the man under a conviction of sin, “you may write the word large about me, for it describes my condition!” We sometimes speak of a born fool. Well, that is exactly what the convicted man feels he is—he has been born a fool, his very nature is foolish—for he puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness! And that not now and then, but by the very force of nature he seems to constantly make a foolish choice. He has been one of those fools who has said in his heart, “No God,” for he has practically lived without thinking of his God. He has been one of those fools who has chosen the transient present and left the eternal future to be forgotten. It is a difficult thing to cure a man of his folly. “Though you should crush a fool in the mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet his foolishness will not depart from him,” says Solomon. That would be a rather rough process, would it not? But it would be useless! Folly would still remain in spite of all the grinding. When a man truly sees his sickness, he feels that he is just such a fool as that—a fool with folly ingrained. “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,” and in the life of a sinner!  
But this man has played the fool. Besides being a fool, he has acted like a fool, for, “fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.” Transgression means breaking bounds and trespassing and he that trespasses in the fields of a God who is so just and so strong to smite, is a fool! Iniquity means lack of equity, lack of truth, lack of rightness, lack of honesty and surely he that tries to cheat God is a fool! How shall he hope to be able to deceive the Omniscient One, or that those eyes which are like a flame of fire shall fail to detect the inequity, the dishonesty of his doings? That he has thought for a moment that he could do it, shows that he is a fool and that he has acted like a fool!  
Now, I am not going to say of any man present that this is true concerning him, but if any man here present feels it is the truth about himself, he is a man that God is going to bless, for when the Lord has shown you yourself, He will afterwards show you Himself. And when He has made you see that you are a fool by nature and a fool by practice, then it is that He will take you into the school of wisdom and yet teach you the right way! The patient’s disease, you will see, is a very bad one and it is one that is very hard to cure.  
You notice, according to the Psalm, that he has come into a condition in which he has lost all appetite. It is written, “Their soul abhors all manner of meat.” A sick man in certain diseases loses his appetite for everything. It matters not how daintily cooked the delicate morsel may be, he turns against it. Ah, well do I remember my own season of suffering when I passed through this experience. I am only describing what has happened to myself and, therefore, I know that it has happened to some of you, for though in detail our experiences differ, in the main they are amazingly alike. How we loathe everything in our sickness! Manna—that is light bread. Bread that is heavy. Wine—it is too hot. Water—it is too cold. It mattered not what was brought to me when I was in that spiritual condition, I could not receive it. Doubtless it is so with you, too. Of the invitations of the Gospel, the soul says, “Ah, Jesus Christ could not intend to invite me.” Of the promises of the Word, the heart says, “Ah, they may be true for everybody else, but they cannot be true for me.” One may preach the sweetest and the softest messages of love, but when a soul is under a sense of sin, it abhors all manner of meat—it turns against all consolation—it refuses to be comforted. You may try to comfort such a case as much as you will, but the dreary thought rises in the soul, “It cannot be for

 me. As for me, I shall perish in my iniquity! I have played the fool exceedingly and God has given me up to my heart’s lusts and now I shall perish in the day when He judges mankind.”  
The Psalmist goes on to say of the sick man that he is drawing near unto the gates of death. I know some souls that feel as if it could not be long before they shall be utterly lost. They have not had any peace, rest, happiness, comfort, for such a great while that it seems to them a wonder that the earth does not open and swallow them up! They cannot sleep at night for terrible dreams and cannot rest at day for terrible sounds that are in their ears. They think of an angry God, the Judgment Seat and the dreadful sword of the Most High that is made bare to smite the wicked. I do not say that many of you are in that state, but if any of you are, it is to you that I am sent tonight with words of mercy, for the text says, “He sent His Word and healed them.” These fools, these that have played the fool, these whose soul abhors all manner of meat and these who draw near unto the gates of death—to these very people He sent His Word and healed them! Oh, that Infinite Mercy might do the same with any such who are in this company!  
There is one hopeful mark about this sick man and that is that he has begun to pray. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” It would not be much of a prayer if it had been printed—you could not have read it. Indeed, you could not print it, for you cannot print a cry. The reporter has not got a sign in all his stenography, I think, by which he can record a cry. A cry is the heart’s own language with which the tongue cannot interfere. Is there anybody here that does pray and yet cannot pray—who groans before God, “Oh, that I might be saved”—whose only words are tears—whose only language is the anguish of his silent spirit? Ah, you are the person—the person that can cry! Cry, then, unto the Lord with all your might! It is said of such, “He sent His Word and healed them.”  
Well, those few touches may suffice. An artist sometimes sketches a likeness with a piece of charcoal. So have I sketched my patient in words few and simple. I am now going to take a longer time to describe the healing in its wonderful simplicity. “He sent His Word and healed them.”  
II. THE CURE IN ITS SIMPLICITY.  
When a physician meets with a very bad case—a case in dire extremity—it will sometimes happen with him that he has to think awhile. Perhaps he has to resort to his books of medicine or to his diary of former cases, or to hold a consultation with another physician before he will venture to prescribe, for something unknown is needed in this unusual disease. But I want you to observe that though the case represented in the Psalm was a very bad one, there was no new thing needed to meet it. The old remedy would suffice. All that the Infinite Lord had to do was to send His Word and heal them! It was the old healing Word of God that had healed many a fool before and could still heal fools—the old healing word that had brought back many from between the very gates of death! Nothing more was needed in order to bring back these who were in such a dreadful condition. For the healing of the souls sick with sin and sick of it, I have no new Gospel to preach nor any new thing to say. Thank God, the old, old Gospel meets every case! New developments of sin, strange out-of-the-way diseases of iniquity keep cropping up, but the old remedy meets them all. God needs not to consult nor make new compounds—the simple thing which healed men centuries ago still heals them. “He sent His Word and healed them.”  
The text may be understood to mean three things. First God sent Christ, the Incarnate Word. That is the essence of the remedy. Then He sent the Bible, the revealed Word. That is the instrument of the remedy. He sent, thirdly, His Word of Power by the Holy Spirit. That is the application of the remedy. Let us speak of these three things. They are all necessary. As there is a Trinity in the one God, so must there to a trinity in the one Word by which men are saved.  
First, let us look at the essence of the remedy. Dear Friends, when God heals a sinner He does it by Christ, who is the Word made flesh who dwelt among us. Almighty healing lies in the Person and work and merit of Him who is called the Word of God, of whom you read, in the first chapter of John’s Gospel, that “the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”  
Now, whatever your disease may be, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is able to meet it. He can heal the guilt of sin. However guilty a soul may be, Christ stands in the sinner’s place, bears the sin and makes Atonement for it unto God. So all sin can be put away. No matter how many your sins, or how black they may be, although they are doubledyed, yet the moment Jesus Christ comes to you and you accept Him— *“Your sins shall vanish quite away  
Though black as Hell before,  
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea  
And shall be found no more!”*  
There is healing for the guilt of sin.  
Probably, however, your conscience is troubled about the influence of sin over your life. Christ can meet that need, too. He can cure you of sinning. Even if you could be forgiven the past, you cannot bear the thought of going on as you have done. Dear sick one, there is healing for your foolishness as well as for your sin—for the iniquity of your heart as well as for the iniquity of your life! Jesus Christ is able to set you all right. If the wheels of the watch are wrong, He is the Great Maker and He can put it all right again. He can rectify every cog of every wheel till He shall have sanctified you wholly—spirit, soul and body. Jesus Christ is made of God unto us not only Justification but Sanctification, too! He is able to meet both the dire ills of life and the guilt and the power of sin.  
Possibly you reply to me that you are suffering in your inmost soul. Well, the Great Physician speaks and He can heal the depression of sin. A sense of sin has broken your bones. A sense of sin has seemed to take away all courage from you. You do not seem to be half a man now, for sin has unstrung you—has made you weak as water. My Lord Jesus Christ can heal that! He can take away the depression, the despondency, yes, and the despair. Though you may have written yourself down as damned. Though you have made a league with Hell and “a covenant with death,” yet my Lord Jesus Christ with one touch of His pierced hand can make your spirit leap for joy! It is His way to pluck us out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay and set our feet upon the rock and put a new song into our mouths and establish our goings. You cannot tell how quickly despondency can be changed for delight when Jesus appears! He can put off your sackcloth and your ashes from you so that you shall never wear them again. He can gird you with gladness and put jewels in your ears and about your neck, and adorn you as a bridegroom decks his bride with ornaments. You little know the great joy which Christ can give, in a moment, to the most desponding sinner!  
If you tell me that sin has done you all sorts of mischiefs—that you feel as if sin had poisoned you all over—that your whole nature is now out of gear and even though it should be healed, yet there are scars which you will never lose, broken bones you will carry to your tomb, I still preach to you of the power of Christ! He can remove even the scars. My Lord has various ointments and remedies with which He can heal even these. What He did here on earth to the bodies of men, He is now prepared to do to the souls of men! There came to Him the blind. They could not see, just as you cannot understand. You say truly that sin has darkened your judgment. What did the Master do but make clay with His spittle, anoint the eyes of the blind and say, “Go and wash,” and the blind went and came back seeing! Sometimes He touched men’s eyes and the scales fell and so they saw! My Lord can give you back your calm and right judgment again. He can so overrule your spirit that it shall no more put the bitter for the sweet and the darkness for the light. He can give you back those eyes of your heart—  
*“He comes from thickest films of night  
To clear the mental ray,  
And on the eyeballs of the blind  
To pour celestial day.”*  
Ah, but you reply, “I can see well enough, but I cannot act. I know what I ought to do, but I do not do it. I perceive the right but I do the wrong—I would, but I cannot.” Still I invite you to Jesus. He can give you the strength you have lost. When my dear Lord was here on earth, there were men with withered hands and He bade them stretch them out and they were restored. There were some that had lain on the bed and could not stir, sick of the palsy, but He bade them walk. And there was one that had been lying for years by Bethesda’s side, that could not stop into the pool. He lay there as you lie at the pool of ordinances, but Christ said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk,” and he did so. My Lord can give you back all power that you have lost—the power to repent, the power to believe, the power to shake off sin, the power to walk in holiness! He can give it all back to you and He can do it now, even while you are sitting in this House of Prayer! Was there ever a disease that came to Christ that puzzled Him? Do you remember one that He ever turned away? In the long list of human diseases reckoned to be incurable, almost all, if not quite all, came under His glance, but was there one that foiled Him? Was there one of which He said, “My Power is not equal to that”? No, you know He even raised the dead! Even though Lazarus had begun to stink, He raised him—he had been dead three days and yet he came forth—when the grave cloths were unwound, there was the living man! What cannot my Master do?  
If I address someone who feels himself to be full of evil till he is almost like a man with a devil within him, I point that man to Christ.

 He can dispossess the devil. Do I speak to one whose raging passion, or whose lustful desire, or whose unsatisfied thirst of drunkenness, or whose long habit of blasphemy has made him like the demoniac? Oh, come here! Come you but within range of that mighty Voice and it shall say, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit, and enter no more into him.” Christ can make even you to be clean!  
Wherever Jesus Christ comes, He is that Word of God that makes men whole! So I say to you tonight that if any of you want to save others, preach Jesus Christ, for He is the Word that heals them! And if any of you want to be saved, think much of Jesus Christ. Look to none else but Jesus Christ. Fix your mind’s eye on Him and trust Him—and as surely as you trust Him, you shall be made whole. In your case it shall be written, “He sent His Word and healed him.” There is nothing about your case that Christ cannot reach! There is in Jesus Christ something exactly adapted to the peculiarly disastrous nature of your position. He can, He will save even you, even you, if you do but trust Him now!  
I am obliged to be brief for time flies so rapidly. And now, notice in the second place, the instrument of the remedy. “He sent His Word and healed them.” That is, He sent this Book, this Revelation which is the Word of God. Though it is Christ that heals men, and not the Bible, the Bible is like the wrapper of the bottle in which the medicine is put—and we find the remedy by unfolding the wrapper. Remember, dear Souls, if you are sick, that the medicine that is to reach your case is somewhere between these two covers. There is something in here for every sin-sick soul that seeks it!  
Perhaps it is a precept you have been neglecting—something of that which the Lord would have you to do. I have known many a soul brought to Christ by a precept. The Law of God has often been a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ that they might find peace in Him.  
But for many more of you there is here an invitation such as this, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters.” That refers to you, does it not? Do you not thirst? And there is the sweet invitation of last Sunday night, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” That has been the instrument of healing to countless numbers.  
Sometimes it is not an invitation, but a promise or a grand encouraging statement such as, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Or such a sweet word as, “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,” which is used by the Great Physician as balm for the wounded soul.  
Precepts, promises, invitations, Gospel statements—here they are! The medicine is put into many forms because the disease assumes so many aspects, but within this Sacred Volume lies that living Word of God which, if it is blessed by the Holy Spirit, will bring peace to your souls! I wish you, therefore, to value this Book beyond all price—to read it much, to read it, praying as you read, “Lord, bless it to my soul”—to lay your heart open to it when it cuts you like a knife—to receive those friendly wounds as meant for your healing. Then open your heart to receive its light that you may see by it—to receive its comforts that you may rejoice through them. Open wide the great doors of your soul that every part of this Word may have entrance there.  
You that preach to others preach much of the Word of God. O dear Sirs, remember good McCheyne’s experience—he says that almost always when there was a case of conversion the hearer attributed it to a text of Scripture that had been quoted in the sermon. I believe it is largely so at all times and when McCheyne again says, “It is God’s Word, not our own, but God’s Word that is generally blessed,” I am sure it is so.  
If you who are hearers have a choice in the matter, frequent a ministry that is full of Scripture. You are more likely to get a blessing, there, than anywhere else. Read books that are full of the very Word of God and then read the Word itself. But do not think you will be saved simply by reading it. That is impossible, for you are only saved by Christ—and He said to the people of His time, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and you will not come unto Me that you might have life.” But though you will not be saved by reading, you may be saved through reading and through reading the Scriptures! While you are reading and hearing God’s precious Word, He may send home some of the Light of God and the Truth of God and the Life which lie concealed within the sacred pages. “He sent His Word and healed them.” My learned doctor, we do not want your new gospel! We want the old Word of God. My friend of the fine poetical speech, you of the grand rhetoric, you of the golden mouth—we want neither you nor your mouth unless you give us the Word of God—just what is revealed in Scripture! There were great preachers before Luther and Calvin, before Wickliffe and Huss and Jerome—they went about preaching and preaching to great crowds, too, but they did not save souls! That was not because they could not speak and were not attractive, but because they had not this story to tell—the story that is in this Book—the story of Him who did hang upon the Cross. We must preach the Word! “Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season,” for it still stands true, “He sent His Word and healed them.”  
Now again time checks me and I must therefore notice that there is a third sense in which we may view this text. Let us speak, then, of the application of the remedy. Jesus Christ on the Cross does not save men while they reject and refuse Him. And this Book does not save anybody until the Holy Spirit with power speaks to the soul. When that happens, then, it is the Word of God in another sense. Just as of old He spoke and it was done, as He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, there seems to be needed a distinct call from God to men or they will not come to Him. The Living Word must leap from the mouth of the Living God or else the Bible will be but a dead letter! Men will turn away from Christ as if it were nothing to them that Jesus died—unless the Spirit reveals the Truth in power! Beloved, you that have been healed, do you not ascribe your healing to the secret mysterious power of the Holy Spirit? You know you give Him the glory. Hence when you wish to bring men to Christ, always honor the Holy Spirit. Do not forget to adore Him, to lean entirely upon Him for all the power with which the healing of a soul is to be accomplished. There is no faith in the world that will save except the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God! There is no true glance of the eyes toward Christ on the Cross but such as the Spirit of God has given!  
Now I want to speak just two or three words about this. Some of you will say, “Ah me, would God that the Spirit of God would speak to me.” Be not deceived, He is speaking to you now! The Word, when it is faithfully preached with prayerful spirit, has the Spirit of God going with it. Men may resist it, but they add to their sin in doing so. As said the man of God of old, “You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did so, do you.” Let us explain what the Spirit of God does not do. Since you can only be saved by hearing about Christ, He will not bring you a new way of salvation or reveal another Savior. And if you are not saved by reading the Word of God and hearing it, He will not be likely to use any other means. The Spirit is of the same mind as father Abraham who said about the five brothers of the man at whose gate Lazarus lay begging, “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” You must not sit still and say, “I expect to see signs and wonders, or else I will not believe.” You shall have no sign and no wonder except the sign of a dying Savior and a Savior risen from the dead—and the added sign of this great wonder that you refuse to believe in Him and put your trust in Him.  
Now know this, that when men are led to Christ by the Spirit of God, they do not know at the time that it is the Spirit of God that is leading them. They have no idea of it! They think, they meditate, they judge, they decide and they believe. They are free agents and they act as such. It is afterwards that they discover that the Spirit of God has been leading them through it all. Now if you wait till you feel the Spirit of God and know it to be the Spirit of God while you are yet unbelieving, you will wait forever—for such an experience will never be granted to you. No man ever knows the Spirit of God so as consciously to be aware that the Spirit is at work with him until he knows Jesus Christ. As no man comes to the Father but through the Son, so no man comes to realize and to be aware of the work of the Spirit on his soul till he knows Jesus Christ!  
What is the Spirit of God, then, to do for you? What I hope in many cases He is now doing, namely, to make you willing, as I trust you are. To make you conscious of your danger, as I trust you are. To make you understand the remedy, as I think you do. And to lead you sweetly and gently to accept what God provides, as I hope you will.  
“Is that all?” asks one. Ah, Beloved, it is a very great, “all.” I know I cannot do that work! And all the ministers in the world put together could not do that which you think to be so little. I am certain if I were sent to you to proclaim that you could all be saved if you would go barefoot from here to John o’Groats and start tonight, that the great northern road would be thronged by people going! People would do anything of that sort to be saved! They would not need to be persuaded. But if we tell them that they are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—it is so simple, it is so easy—that God has to work a miracle before He can bring their proud hearts to consent to be saved in that way! He has to give men new life and new light before they will come to it. Oh, have you come to it? Have you come to it now? Do you feel that at this instant you can say, “I do trust Jesus.” Well, dear Brother, or Sister, it is the Spirit of God that has brought you to it! He is within you! You need not raise any question about it. He has sent the Word and healed you. If He has brought you there, keep saying—

*“While I view You wounded, grieving,  
Breathless on the cursed tree,  
Gladly I’d feel my heart believing  
That You suffered thus for me.”*  
Do you trust yourself to Him now, whether you sink or swim? Do you trust yourself to Him that bled on the tree? That is the work of the Spirit of God—none but He could have done it!  
“It seems so little,” says one. “It looks as if I might have done it myself.” Ah, but that little thing is the great thing here. When Elisha said, “Wash in Jordan and be clean,” that was the hard thing. “If the Prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it?” asked his servant. But it was really a great thing the Prophet had commanded. If our Gospel were hard, it would be easy, but because it is easy it is hard! It needs a strong hand to bring us down to this and I am praying while I am preaching to you that the Lord Jesus Christ would now send forth the ever-blessed Spirit—His own Word of Power—to bring you to Himself. Look and live!  
Oh, are you sick? Christ is a Physician on purpose for the sick! Are you crying? Christ is One who always comes at the cry of sick souls! Are you willing to be saved in God’s way? Will you let Him do what He wills with you? Do you surrender at discretion? Do you say, “Anyway, anyway, just so I may be but saved from the wrath to come?” Will you now open wide your hearts to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord? Then the Spirit of God is present healing you! He is at work with you. He has healed you, I trust, already! Only trust the bleeding Lamb of God, only trust Him! It is done. It is done. All glory to the Lamb of God! It is done! All glory to the Divine Spirit who has brought us into this state of salvation! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 107.**

1. O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever. Because we are sinners, God’s goodness takes the form of mercy. Mercy—this was what we need—therefore, instead of mere benevolence towards the good, God’s love takes the form of mercy towards the guilty and this mercy is forever! It always was, always is and always shall be.

2. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Let the redeemed be the first to sing and let them sing the sweetest of all. O children of God, you are meant to be leaders in the chorus of God’s praise! All nature is a great organ and if you are what you should be, you are the men and women whose fingers of gratitude are to touch the keys and bring forth thunders of praise unto God!

3. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. It is a part of Redemption’s work to gather out all people—fetch them into a separated condition. The voice of Redemption sounds—“Come out from among them and be you separate. Touch not the unclean thing.” And the hand of Redemption gathers out God’s chosen and brings them into a saved unity where they enjoy fellowship with each other and with God. Now here he gives a description of the gratitude which is due to God from different persons who have been partakers of His mercy. First, souls are here compared to lost travelers.

4-6. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. Some of you know what this means. You have lost your way. You know not how to find it. Spiritually you are in a wilderness and you would, if you could, get to the city of Jerusalem. You would get to the very heart of God, but you cannot. You find no city to dwell in—no peace—no rest.

Moreover, your spiritual needs are very pressing. You are hungry and you are thirsty, but it is a wilderness and you cannot find a morsel of food. No manna drops for you. Your soul is ready to faint. You feel as if you could not go another step nor search another inch. To lie down and die is all that you can do. But the vultures are in the air and you are afraid even of despair. You are hard pressed. Notice it is said, “Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble.” Why did not they do so before? Because men do not begin to pray to God as long as they have any hope besides. But when all hope is gone, then comes the first real living, agonizing, cry to Heaven—and no sooner is that heard than God answers it! “He delivered them out of their distresses.”

7-9. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness. Is there a longing soul here tonight? Amidst these thousands, surely there must be some! Well, dear Soul, God will satisfy you! He will not merely stay your hunger for a little while, and help you to break your fast, but your longing shall be satisfied. And if you are hungry, He will fill you and fill you not only with good, but with goodness itself—the very quintessence of everything that is excellent! Next, the Psalmist describes prisoners. We have a picture of the spiritual state of man from another point of view.

10-13. Such as it is in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron because they rebelled against the words of God’s and condemned the counsel of the Most High: therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses. These were prisoners in a prison where they were forced to work and where they found no rest. A picture of a dark soul—a soul over which death spread his dragon wings. You know what it means to be brought into spiritual death—to feel the chill of spiritual death even to your very marrow, paralyzing you and binding all your hopes in everlasting frost, do you not? Have you been in dread of the wrath to come? Have you set to work to redeem yourselves and toiled like slaves, but toiled in vain? Has your heart been brought down from your high notions, your proud desires, your boasting and your loftiness? Then is fulfilled in you the words of this text—“Therefore He brought down their heart with labor: they fell down and there was none to help.”

“Then,” but not till then—“they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses.” Proud hearts will not pray. When a man can help himself, he will not cry to God. As long as he has any hope left within the compass of his nature, he will not turn to the God who made him. But what a blessed despair that is which drives us to God! It is like the wave that sweeps the mariner up on to the rock where he is safe. May such a wave of despair catch some of us and hurl us into safety! They cried and He saved them.

14-16. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men; for He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. The third picture of our lost estate is given us under the image of a sick man.

17-19. Fools because of their transgressions and because of their iniquities are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry. Even these fools! “Then they cry”—

19-22. Unto the LORD in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. One more picture is given and that is of a soul at sea, tossed with tempest and not comforted—spiritually shipwrecked.

23-28. They that go down to the sea in ships that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep. For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry. Never till they get to their wit’s end do men cry to God! When nothing else is to be done and all human might has utterly failed, then they cry. Now, you that have ever been in this storm—you know what it means. You recollect how you were sailing smoothly along with fair weather and suddenly a spiritual cyclone took hold of you, and twisted your soul roundabout—threw you sometimes up with presumptuous hopes, and then down again with awful despairs! You could not stand or hold to anything, even the Truth of God you knew, you could not believe, and the promises which you could believe, you could not apply to yourself. There was no hold-fast for you! You reeled and staggered and your courage was gone. Your soul was melted because of trouble. There seemed nothing before you but the abyss. Deep called to deep, and Jehovah’s waterspouts sent forth a sound. “Now,” you thought, “surely the end is come.” And then it was that you began to pray.

28-32. Unto the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quiet; so He brings them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THEIR DESIRED HAVEN  
NO. 3316

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 1866.

**“So He brings them to their desired haven.”  
Psalm 107:30.**

TAKEN strictly, according to its original context, the text plainly and powerfully reminds us that our Providential mercies ought never be forgotten—and more especially those remarkable mercies which concern the safety of our life in times of great peril.

If there are any of you who have been exposed to storms at sea, or who have in any other way been brought near death’s door, and have then been strikingly rescued, should you not devote your life to Him who has spared and prolonged it? Do you think it was without a design that God brought you into the peril? And is it without a purpose that He has lengthened out your span of life? Oh, I pray you, if you have hitherto been ungrateful, let this tenderness of His in sparing your useless life—(for remember it has been useless to Him)—excite in you a hundredfold tenderness! A tenderness of repentance for the past, and of holy desire for the future. In such an assembly as this I have surely some who have either been restored from a bed of sickness when they were almost given over, or who have been preserved from accidents on land, or have had hairbreadth escapes at sea. Oh, praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works toward you! And at the foot of the Cross of Calvary dedicate your few remaining days to the service of the Preserver of men!

But this evening, while remembering these important Truths of God, we intend to use the text with yet another objective. This natural voyage on the sea may be a very excellent type and picture of the spiritual voyage which all men undertake in their soul’s life. And we should first interpret the text as it concerns the seeking sinner on the sea of soultrouble, brought at length by the gracious Pilot to his desired haven of peace through believing. And then we shall very briefly construe the text with reference to the saint brought through all the troubles of life to the desired haven of the New Jerusalem, where he shall rest forever free from all future storms and perils.

First, then, let us look at I. THE SEEKING SINNER AS A SOULVOYAGER.

Our first thought suggested here is that with regard to the sinner, there is a haven. The soul of the man or woman is far out at sea, liable to be wrecked and in such a storm he or she will be wrecked, for no craft can live it out unless it makes all speed for the haven. And there is a haven for storm-tossed, ship-wrecked souls! There is a harbor of refuge for tempest-driven sinners! That haven is Christ Jesus, received by faith into the soul. I compare Him to a haven because of the peace which those enjoy who once shelter in Him. It is wild, and black, and fierce out there, Sinner, where you are! But there is peace—“the peace of God that passes all understanding”—where the true Believer is. It is not because his ship is different from yours. If he were where you are, as once he was, he would still be in the same peril and suffer the same damage as you. But he is now “in Christ” and you are not. He has changed the hurricane for the haven, the danger for the calm confidence of safety! Oh, if you only knew the peace which faith brings, it would not be long before you cried to God in your trouble and He would bring you to His dear Son and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I also call Jesus a haven because of the safety that there is to every soul that is in Him. Ships are wrecked and broken to pieces out there, on the shoals, on the quicksand, or on the iron-bound coasts—but they escape wreck in the haven. There let the storm-king rage his worst and angriest abroad—they are in perfect peace! Sometimes, not a ripple disturbs the vessel that is in the harbor. My Hearer, you are in great danger tonight! You may soon be in Hell and even now the wrath of God abides on you, for you are “without God” and, consequently, “without hope in the world.” But the Christian is in no such danger! Sin, which is the source of all soul-danger, has been fully forgiven him. He will not need even to fear death, for to him death is but the gate of life! He need have no fears of temporal trouble, for he has left his burdens with the great BurdenBearer and may cast all his care on Him who cares for him. He has a peace which is founded upon the Immutable Truth of God! It is not a false peace which expects that there will never come a storm, but a true solid peace which knows that though the though the storm will come, he needs not dread it because his vessel is safe in the haven!

I call Christ a haven, again, because when we get into Him, we do very much what ships do in the haven—we begin unloading. Oh, what a cargo of black sins we had! Oh, what a store of grief, fears, follies and doubts! But when we come to Jesus Christ we unload them all. We cast overboard even what we once thought precious, counting it but dross and dung that we may win Christ and be found in Him. What a blessed riddance to be free of such foul rubbish as once threatened to founder our souls! Says the hymn—

*“I lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God!  
He bears them all and frees us,  
From the accursed load.”*

That is what faith is helped to do. It casts all its sins, doubts, fears and cares upon Jesus Christ, the great Sin-Bearer, and so is made free!

I call Him a haven, too, because when a ship gets to the haven, it begins to load again. The haven is as frequently the starting place for a new voyage, as the goal to the previous one. And emphatically is that so in our soul’s experience.

What fine store does the trustful soul take on board when it comes to Jesus Christ! Of joy, of love, privilege, holiness, delight and fellowship, for we have inexhaustible riches of Grace and blessing in Him. When we come to Him, these unbounded treasures are all ours! God All-Sufficient is revealed to us in the Person of the Man, Christ Jesus. Like the haven of Araby, where the ships take on board their gold and their perfume, so the soul receives its most precious and priceless gifts from the AllBountiful Redeemer Lord! Oh, you who are still out on the restless, wild sea of sin and dissatisfaction of storm and dread, will you not long to reach the haven that you may be peaceful and safe, happy and secure because you lose your sins and in their place may receive of His fullness, Grace for Grace?

Mariner! I think I hear you say, “I would gladly came to the port, but what about it, Sir? What are the dues there?” Sinner, it is a free port— there is nothing to pay! Of all the keels that ever floated into that haven there was never one that had anything to bring that was worth receiving. There has been much taken out, but nothing has been brought in that was worth the acceptance. Christ will charge you no custom’s dues, so run to this port, for it is freely open to every sinner that desires to cast anchor there! There is room for you, too. There are many vessels—there is a great fleet, a blessedly peaceful fleet, within, but there is room for you. Do you tell me that there was once a bar before the harbor? Yes, but it has been blasted clean away and is now altogether removed! There is sea-room for the heaviest craft! Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool! Though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow! You say that your heavy-laden boat will draw many a foot of Mercy’s water? Ah, but there’s many a foot here! There is room even though your ship is burdened up to the bulwarks. There is no fear of your touching the bottom of God’s bottomless Grace, wisdom and love! There is always room for you to come. Some ports are only open at certain states of the tide, and so when the tide is out and low, the boat that makes for the haven may run upon the rocks, or the Black Middens somewhere—but of this there is no fear for you—

*“The blessed gates of Gospel Grace*

*Stand open night and day!”*  
Some souls have run for the haven at the very last and, by His mercy, they have got in—while others have run for it, blessed be God, while yet quite young! Oh, may it be your happy lot at the very commencement of life’s voyage, young men and women, to run for this blessed haven and find yourselves strong and secure and serene!

At any rate, let me say to you, however despairing you may be, if God gives you the will to run for this harbor, you may do so and find without doubt that it will be found open to receive you! Christ Jesus, then, is a true haven for the soul—and they who trust in Him are made perfectly secure!

We must not stay longer on this point, however, fair and attractive as it is, but note that the text speaks of “a desired haven.” Now I wonder whether to all of us, Christ Jesus is a desired haven. He is a haven, but is He a desired haven to you? Put your hand now upon your heart and see if you can find a deep desire after Christ there. Oh, I would have hope in preaching to such a congregation, even though none of you knew Christ, if you did but truly desire Him! You would then be like tinder to my spark and be like prepared ground. I should only have to sow the Seed and you would be that fruitful soil which receive it—and yield a harvest a hundred-fold! Christ is not desired by some of you and why not? But I think I can easily find out those who desire the haven. They are just these. The sailor desires the haven when he has an unfavorable breeze. Do you feel as if Providence were blowing in your teeth? And are temptations setting in very strong? And does the recollection of your past sin come blowing a hard gale against you? But a little while ago you sailed and were very comfortable, for ‘twas all smooth water with you! The sea was like a millpond! But now the waves roll and break mountains high and the wind is in your teeth. I hope you will come to desire the Savior now. Sick of the world and all its turbulence, may you now be anxious after Him and His peace. The sailor desires to get into harbor, too,

 when he finds he is in weather which he is not likely to ride out. “Would God,” says the boatswain, “that we could see the light.” “Oh, that we were now in the haven,” says the master, “for there are threatening, angry breakers ahead.” Do you not see the breakers ahead, Sinner? Are you not afraid of dying and more afraid of living? Do not the storms and trials of life drive you to desire something better than the vain world can give you? And does not the prospect of the afterlife alarm you? Then I hope that to your belabored soul Christ is the desired haven!

But even more, the haven is desired by the sailor whose ship is leaky. “She will soon go down,” he says, “we have kept the pump going, but the water gains upon us.” Do you feel your spirit to be such an unseaworthy craft that you are afraid to go out into or stay out in the depths of the sea with her? Do you begin to feel, or fear, she is sinking? If so, then my Lord Jesus Christ will be to you a “desired haven,” indeed! Ah, no sinner prizes salvation like the sinner who knows he is lost! May our God give you to know that you are!—

*“The sinner is a sacred thing,  
The Holy Spirit has made him so.”*

That is, a really awakened sinner, for his ship he will not take to harbor unless he feels that she must sink unless he does! I pray God that you may get into such a sinking state that you may be compelled to go to Him. And when the sailor himself is sick, it is then he needs the haven. When he feels as if he must die, then he says, “I wish I were safe on shore!” Do you feel sick at heart? Does your very soul turn within you till you reel and stagger like a drunken man? Then you will desire the haven and I bless God you will have it! There is many a sailor who has desired the haven who has yet never reached it but gone down into the depths— but there has never been one upon the sea of life who has desired Christ with a really intense longing and a loving and anxious heart, but he has found Him before long! Oh, Sinner, I have hope for you, for if you desire Christ, Christ even more desires you!

We cannot stop, however, even here, for next we have to talk about the Pilot. How do they get into the haven? He brings them there. The text is speaking of God. “So He brings them to their desired haven.” We know nothing of the navigator of the sea of salvation. To get into the harbor is never effected by human skill nor wisdom. “I am a Christian” said a young woman once. Said the minister, “When did you become a Christian?” “I am sure I don’t know, Sir,” was the reply, “but I supposed it was when I was christened.” A great many people have the same notion. Ah, but “so” He does not bring any to the desired haven, but in quite an altogether different way! It is by the personally coming on board of the soul, of the Great Pilot, the Holy Spirit, that the heart is steered into the safe haven. But she will rot or wreck outside, or founder to the bottom unless God, Himself, shall bring her into the quiet harbor of His glorious Redemption. “So He brings them.” Dear Hearer, do you say, “There is a haven, and I desire to make for the land, but the wind is contrary. I would tack and tack about, but the more I try, the farther off from the haven do I seem to be”? Yes, but He who is the Haven is also the Pilot to bring you to the haven! You have no repentance, you say. He gives it! Ask Him for it. You have no faith. He gives it—seek it at His hands. Oh, that you had Grace to trust Him as much as to bring you to Himself, as to bring you to Heaven! You may not get at Him, you toiling boat. You cannot reach Christ who is on the land, but He comes walking on the water to meet you. “It is I,” He says, “be not afraid.”

Despair not, doubt not, you who desire! Put up the signals of distress—fire the guns of prayer again and again—and He will come! The Pilot who has weathered and rescued you from many a storm, before, will bring you safely to harbor. He is a Pilot who knows the sea well—

*“He knows what strong temptations mean,*

*For He has felt the same.”*  
He has steered many a vessel into port that was in quite as bad a condition as you are now. He is well-skilled! He has got a Divine Certificate from the Trinity House. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; He has anointed Me to do this very work of bringing poor shipwrecked mariners to the Port of Peace.” Commit yourself to His hands! Let Him board your vessel and He will make your ship tack about and bring you soon into the still and quiet waters of the desired haven!

But I come now to the point I want specially to drive at, and that is the passage to the haven. They are brought to the haven they desire and they are brought there by the Pilot, but how are they brought? The text says, “So He brings them to their desired haven.” The way into the haven is not always a smooth one. Some are brought to Christ as if they had never known a storm. Do not, of course, desire and seek a storm—but as long as you get safely into the haven it matters not how you get there. If you trust Christ, do not trouble yourselves because you never went through the Slough of Despond. Read the life of John Bunyan and you will find him much troubled and tumbled up and down for years. You may have felt little of this, perhaps, yet if your trust in Christ is sincere and real, it matters not! If the ship reaches the haven and is safely sheltered there, whether she had a stormy passage or a smooth one is of little importance. The great thing is to be “Safe home, safe home in port.” Still, it often happens that we come into the port of Christ’s salvation through a storm. Read the passage and you will see how frequently this occurs. “They mount up to Heaven, they go down again into the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man. They cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm to be a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quite. So He brings them to their desired haven.” They are greatly troubled, but it drives them to prayer—prayer gets its answer and so they get Christ! I thank God that I was brought into peace by believing. It was many and many a day before I found Christ. It is a strange thing, but as I was talking this afternoon with a dear friend in Christ about spiritual things, we remarked to one another that the most of the men who had been made useful in winning souls had a hard time of it, when they first came to Christ. For the most part a deep and painful experience seems to be absolutely necessary to enable a minister to get a hold and a grip upon the Doctrines of Grace. Still, let us never forget that the tossing is not the haven and the storm is not the port. A sense of sin does not save—and terrors of conscience do not justify. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” That is the great message to us all! Trust in Jesus—this it is that brings you into port. May God bring you there! And we will then sing together, and “praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.”

I hope to meet full many of you in that other port above. Meanwhile, what a blessing and privilege it is that there are so many of us in the port of Christ here and now, on this sin-afflicted earth! Let us hand out the flags tonight, everyone of them as we try to bless and magnify the King who is, Himself, the Pilot, who made the haven, who Himself bears the storm upon His own bosom, that we may be saved from it and be hidden from all the rolling billows, and find a secure resting place in Him!

And now for only a few minutes let us apply the text to Believers and see—II. THE SINCERE SAINT AS A SOUL-VOYAGER. We are accustomed to speak of Heaven as our home and I think we would not strain the point, tonight, if we speak of it as our haven. The Church in the olden times was often pictured in symbols by a ship and, perhaps, no better type of the Church could be found. The ship is out at sea. We are on our journey home. The prow is towards the Promised Land. We hope to reach the Isles of the Happy in the land of the hereafter where the waters are eternally still and the billows roll no more. In yonder haven of our soul there is a peace transcending even the peace which we have learned upon earth though it passes all understanding—a peace that no storm can by any possibility even break—no storm within, no tempest without. There shall be no panics there, no losses of money there, no sickening wife, no dying child, no tortured brain, no anguish in the heart—there we shall be free from all the storms that tossed us on the sea of life.

That port is one from which the ship shall never make another voyage—she is home for good—not to be broken up, but to be re-filled after a better fashion! No longer mortal, for this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruption must put on incorruption. She shall make voyages, but still be in the haven, for the eternal haven is wide as infinity and we may sail on and on forever—and it shall always be upon a sea where not a wave of trouble, a breaker of sin or sorrow shall beat on our serene soul! There shall be no more leakage there, no more complaint that the vessel is out of trim. The sin that has pierced us through and through like some of these sea-worms which eat through the staunchest timbers shall be forever done with! Yes, forever and ever!

I love to think often and deeply of that haven, dear Friends! If not to you, I am sure it is to me, a “desired haven.” If you ask me why it is desired, I can only answer that when I see the perils of the way—the storms we have had to face and outride and how little our poor vessel is able to overcome them—we may well long to be forever where such trials and, indeed, all trials, shall never come! I desire to be in that haven, I think, as much as anything—that I may meet there my many comrades who have gone before.

It has been my lot to serve under the Great Captain now for some few years. There are names that are on the roll of my Master in Heaven which I venerate and men whom I long to see. Rowland Hill once took a journey, we are told, from Cambridge, some ten or twelve miles, to see an old dying saint, and he said to her, “Now, you will be in Heaven before me, but do tell them that poor old Rowland is on the road. And when you get there give my love to the three Johns—John who leaned on the Savior’s bosom, John Calvin and John Bunyan.” Well, we may well wish to see them and the many who shall be there, for we shall have near and intimate communion with them! Let us drink tonight the cup of fellowship and toast the friends that are ahead! We have been long enough out from shore, I think, almost to forget those behind and begin to remember those who are ahead. We are homeward bound and we long to be at home for the sake of the friends who have gone before. Some dear to us in ties of flesh are there—those who were to us as father, mother, wife or child. Your little ones are beckoning some of you to the celestial shore! How much a desired haven it should be to you! I have many spiritual children on the other side of life’s Jordan. Multitudes are now there who learned the Savior’s name from my stammering words—and came to see His transcendent beauties as He was being set forth, lifted up and exhibited here in the midst of this great congregation! I know they will welcome me, their spiritual father, and I long to be with them!

But best of all it is a desired haven, because He is there, who though He was of a human mother born, is yet truly Divine! He, whom though— *“We have not seen His face,  
Unceasing we adore!  
The Man of Sorrows at the Father’s side, The Man of Love, the Crucified.”*

Blow, blow you winds! Let the sails go to ribbons if they must! Let the vessel rush and fly before the gale, if only she does but get safely into “the desired haven!” We may even think the storm is blest that drives her the more quickly there, for it is, indeed, a desired haven!

Are you now desiring it, my dear Brothers and Sisters? It is not always that we do. We get a trick of loitering along the road or merely cruising on the ocean. What a strange thing that anything here should beguile us!—

*“What is there that I should wait,  
My hope’s alone in Thee!  
When will You open Glory’s gate,  
And take me up to Thee?”*

Is there anything here that ought to make us stop a moment if there is that prospect beyond of the Savior’s face and the vision of His Glory? I think we can say, some of us, that at times—

*“Our thirsty spirit faints  
To reach the land we love—  
The bright inheritance of saints,  
Jerusalem above!”*

You see I am running over the same heads as we had in the first part—a haven, a desired haven, and then the Pilot. Shall I ever get to the desired haven? I would despair of it in going through so tortuous a channel so thickly set with difficulties and perils, but my Pilot knows the course! My Pilot found the way to Heaven, Himself, and if I trust Him absolutely, giving the vessel entirely to His charge, He will find the way for me, too! Besides this, He has this advantage—He is the Master of the winds and waves! And so I may confidently—

*“Leave to His sovereign will  
To choose and to command.”*

For He will certainly bring me safely home.  
But the passage to the haven needs, too, your thought. My Christian  
Brothers and Sisters, you are now being tossed on the sea. You came  
here tonight wondering what God was doing with you. You old sailors  
ought not to be astonished or alarmed at a storm. Did you imagine the  
sea had turned to dry land? Did you expect to reach yonder distant shore  
without feeling the heave of the waves? Why the youngsters and novices  
may expect such things if they will! But you who are seasoned mariners  
and are getting gray ought to know better! Has it been smooth all the way  
until now? Why expect it to be sunny and serene now? Master John Bunyan’s ditty has it—  
**“A Christian is seldom long at ease,  
When one trouble’s gone, another does him seize.”**  
Do you not expect it? If you do not, I would alter my reckoning if I were  
you! Just turn to the log-book of your memory—how many days together  
have you generally been in smooth water? Not many, I will guarantee  
you. You ancient mariners who have lived at sea these many years and  
have got your sea-legs now, and can stand where others fall, I ask you  
whether you have not been more accustomed to rolling billows than you  
have been to the ocean smooth as a mill-pond? And do you expect to see  
it alter for you now? Between you and Canaan there are a few more  
storms. Between here and the everlasting rest there are turmoils yet to  
encounter, but, “so He brings them to their desired haven.” Perhaps if it  
were always smooth, they would never get there—the treacherous stream  
of earthly ease would bear them out to the cataract of everlasting destruction! Perhaps without the wind and without the storm, yes, and  
without the clouds and the tempest, and the thunder and the lightning,  
the boat might never reach the haven! The boats upon earth’s seas may  
reach their haven without the aid of storms, but not so with us, for, to  
again repeat the words of Cowper, here if not in the other case— *“The path of sorrow, and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*And now my last word that I would venture to say is this—“So he  
brings them to their desired haven.” That does not mean you, young  
man, for Christ is not on board your heart and life—you do not desire the  
haven and you will never be brought there against your will! Who are  
they, then, that are brought there? The text and its context tells us. They  
are those who “cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saves them out  
of their distress.” Are you a crying soul? Pleading, entreating His rescue  
and deliverance? That word, “cry,” is a very appropriate and suggestive one. That is the true way to pray. As God inspires, cry to Him! A girl who had been converted was asked what was the difference between her prayers now and before she was converted. She answered, “Sir, first I prayed as my mother taught me, but now I pray as God prompts and teaches me.” That is a blessed and vital difference! You have seen and heard your children cry. Well, how is it done? Some of them seem to cry all over. When they want something very badly, they not only cry with their throats, but they cry also with their legs and hands and eyes! And, indeed, they cry with all their nature. And that, too, is the right way to pray. You cannot get it out, perhaps—well then, feel it within, for God  
can see the inward feeling. “He hears the desires of the humble.” A man once in great trouble, a poor Hottentot, went to his Dutch master and said he felt a great weight and he needed to pray—would he tell  
him how? The Dutchman did not know and could not tell him. But when  
the Hottentot went to the place at Cape Town where he heard the Bible  
read, he listened to the story of the Pharisee. And as he heard it he said,  
“Dat man a good man. I can’t pray like him. Dat prayer not suit me. I  
can’t pray dat.” Presently the preacher went on reading the publican’s  
prayer, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” The man said, “Dat man a bad  
man. God not hear dat prayer.” But when he came to, “That man went  
down to his house justified rather than the other,” he said, “Den I’ll pray  
dat bad man’s prayer. God hear him, God hear me,” and not long after he  
was heard to say, “Rocks, hills, rivers, trees, tell God my soul so happy,  
for He has heard my prayer and put my sins away!”  
Now, you who want to cry to God but do not know how, I recommend  
to you the publican’s prayer, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Breathe  
that out before the Throne of God and you shall one day be among the  
company of whom it is said, “So He brings them to their desired haven,”  
and you shall rest in Jesus—  
*“Forever with the Lord.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 119:81-96.**

Verse 81. My soul faints for Your salvation: but I hope in Your Word. The ship rocks, but the anchor holds. The singer is ready to faint, but he is not ready to despair. He knows where his restoring will come.

82. My eyes fail for Your Word, saying, When will You comfort me? What a mercy it is to have our eyes on God’s Word, full as it is of blessing—to be waiting till the blessing comes out of it! My eyes watch Your Word that is so full of the rain of comfort—and I say to myself, “When will it descend and refresh me? When will the clouds let fall their silver drops upon my thirsty soul?”

83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget Your statues. I feel dried up, smeared and smirched as with soot—my very beauty is gone from me and my usefulness, too. I am not fit to hold anything, for I have become like a skin bottle that is parched up. Yet for all that, I have a memory of Your Word—the smoke and the heat have not dried out of me the flavor of that good old “wine on the lees well refined” that once filled my heart.

84. How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on them that persecute me? “How many are the days of Your servant?” Or rather, how few they are—be not long in coming to me, lest I die while You are still on the road.

85. The proud have dug pits for me, which are not after Your Law. They might make pits for lions and tigers, but not for sheep. These pits were not after God’s Law. There are still cruel enemies who would, if they could, entrap the people of God—shall not this make us feel what a great mercy it is we have one to be our Guardian and Defender who knows where the pitfalls are?

86. All Your commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully—help me. There is a fine prayer for us every day in the week—“Help me.” Lord, I am helpless if You do not help me. You are the helper of Israel—He that keeps Israel will not slumber nor sleep. “Help me.”

87. They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not Your precepts. “They had almost consumed me upon earth.” They seemed as if they would swallow me up entirely, “but I forsook not Your precepts” and, therefore, they could not consume me. I was invulnerable and invincible because I stuck to rectitude and kept to Your precepts.

88, 89. Quicken me after Your loving kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Your mouth. Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in Heaven. There is not a new Divine Word, or a new Gospel, or a new Law—but it is a settled Gospel, a settled Law, a settled Revelation—“settled in Heaven,” stereotyped, fixed, made permanent! If perfect, then unalterable—if alterable, then would it be imperfect.

90. Your faithfulness is unto all generations: You have established the earth, and it abides. “Your faithfulness is unto all generations.” You who were true to Abraham will be true to David. You who were true to David will be true to me. You are always faithful to Your own Nature and Godhead. “You have established the earth, and it abides.” It would rot out of its place. It would rush into space like a truant planet if You did not hold it where it is. You, therefore, will hold Your Gospel where it is and Your servants where they are.

91. They continue this day according to Your ordinances: for all are Your servants. The fixed laws of the universe have their analogy in the fixed rules of Revelation. Are not all material things Your servants? And they are kept—You will therefore keep us.

92, 93. Unless Your Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts: for with them You have quickened me. We may well keep to that which is our life! If God’s precepts breed life in us and then quicken us, and so renew that life, let us stand to them, be obedient to them and that at all times!

94. I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts. “I am Yours, save me.” Oh, what a sweet assertion. “I am Yours”—Your creature, Your redeemed one, Your chosen, Your espoused. “I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts.”

95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me. Let them wait.  
95. But I will consider Your testimonies. I will not consider the wicked—they are not worth it—they would only distract or distress me. I will keep my thoughts fixed upon Your Word, and so shall I be at peace and escape from their malice.  
96. I have seen an end of all perfection: but Your commandment is exceedingly broad. Yes, all perfection in the creature! In very deed it is an attribute of the Creator, and whether it is true or false, whether men have the excellence they boast of, or have it not, there must be an end to it all—either as to its extent or its duration—but Your commandment has no limit, it covers everything! And it has no termination, it endures forever! “Your commandment is exceedingly broad.”

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GOD HAS SPOKEN!— REJOICE!  
NO. 2864

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12, 1876.

**“God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem and measure out the valley of Succoth.” Psalm 108:7.**

THERE is an old promise concerning God’s people which says, “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” This text is one of the instances in which the Lord has dealt with His saints upon the lines of that promise. Read the preceding verse. David there prays, “Save with Your right hand and answer me.” And while he is waiting for God to answer him, he remembers that God has already spoken. In effect, he says to himself, “I am waiting for an answer, but God has given it to me.” Very often the response to a Believer’s petition has been practically received before he presents his request—he only needs that God should open his eyes for him to see that before he called, God had answered his supplication! Indeed, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in one sense all your prayers—that is, your prayers that ought to be answered— are already answered, for whatever there may be that you may rightly ask of God, you really have it, since in giving us Christ, He has already given us all things! An important part of the duty of faith is to believe that you have what you ask in prayer and then you shall have it. This is blessed philosophy—may we all learn it!

Oftentimes, when we are crying to God and waiting for an answer to our petition, if we did but look around us—and if we had more acute powers of observation—if our spiritual faculties were keener and quicker, we would perceive that we already have the very thing for which we are asking. Some of you have, perhaps, been saying, “Oh, that we were, indeed, the Lord’s people who have their prayers answered even before they offer them! Well, then, turn to the Book and you will find that the Lord has there told you that you are His if, indeed, you are believing in His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God has already given you, by that most sure word of testimony, the clearest possible evidence of your personal interest in Christ! If you are asking for some further kind assuring word to soothe your fears to rest, turn to the Bible, for there is in it the very Word of God you need. So, seek it out, for I may truly say of God’s Revelation in this blessed Book—

*“What more can He say than to you He has said, You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?”*

This leads me to the practical remark that, possibly, the very thing that you have been praying for so long, you may already have obtained— and God may not intend you to pray any longer about it, but may say to you, as He did to Moses, “‘Why do you cry unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.’ Believe that you have the blessing for which you are asking and go forward in that belief! The time for praying about it has passed. This is the time for grasping the blessing by faith and using it to My praise and glory.” So it seems to me, in our text, that David had prayed, and then suddenly remembered that he had already received the very thing for which he had asked. So he shakes himself from the dust and cries, confidently and jubilantly, “God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.”

I. Three things are clear in the text and the first is that GOD’S WORD IS THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH—“God has spoken in His holiness.” That is the solid basis on which faith builds.

To me this is a very precious Truth of God, even for the very childhood of Christian life—“God has spoken.” He has not merely put before us His works, which are like hieroglyphs, difficult to read at times, but He has actually broken what otherwise had been eternal silence and spoken to us in words that even a child can comprehend! Unbelieving men still say, as they did of old, “‘Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ If there is a God at all, there is a great gulf fixed between Him and men; how can we know anything about Him?” Ah, Sirs, that great gulf will always be between you and your God if you do not believe in the Revelation that He has given you in His Inspired Word! Until that terrible day comes, when He shall speak in thunder-tones of wrath and summon His guilty creatures to appear at His judgment bar, you will not hear His voice, except as it speaks to you in His Word.

But “God has spoken in His holiness” and we ought to be thankful that we have not to serve a God who is dumb. He spoke, in the garden of Eden, when our first parents sinned against Him. To the serpent He said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” It was a message of hope to the world when God spoke that great promise concerning His Son. Since then, “at sundry times and in divers manners,” God has spoken unto men by His servants and “by His Son,” of which we have the record in this blessed Book. And, since it is a message of mercy and love to us, we ought at once to rejoice that “God has spoken.” Sinner, you are pleading with God for mercy and He might well refuse to answer you even a word, but, “God has spoken” already, and the answer to your petition is already recorded in His Word! If, when Adam sinned, He had turned away from our rebellious race and said, “From now on I will hold no communication with you until that day when, with fire and sword, I punish you for your many transgressions,” we would have had no cause for complaining against Him. Certainly we could not have impeached His justice or found fault with His severity! But, “God has spoken.” He has broken the silence which would have been death to us and, blessed be His name, He has Divinely spoken to us by Him who is THE WORD OF GOD—by God’s great LOGOS—the only voice by which He could fully speak out His whole soul so that men might be able to comprehend Him! And it is upon what God has spoken to us, by His Son, that we have to place our faith, so that, had He not spoken, we would not have had any foundation for our faith—so this is our joy, that “God has spoken.”

Many of us are, I trust, at least somewhat acquainted with what God has spoken, though I wish that we were all more perfectly acquainted with His Word and that our confidence more fully rested upon what the Lord has therein revealed to us.

Why is it that you are able to confide in God’s Word? Surely it is because you know that for God to speak is for Him to do as He has said. By His Word He made the heavens and the earth—and it is by His Word that the heavens and the earth continue as they are to this day! When He shall “once more” speak, as Paul says in his Epistle to the Hebrews, then shall He unmake what He made and cast away the worn-out vesture, for, as the Old Hundredth Psalm reminds us—

*“He can create and He can destroy.”*

God’s speaking is very different from man’s. Very often man talks about something that he says he will do, but when he has talked about it, that is the end of the matter as far as he is concerned. Man has spoken. Oh, yes, but you can never be sure that with the talking tongue will go the working hand! He who is quick to promise is not always so prompt to perform. We have many proverbs which remind us that men set light by one another’s promises, and well they may, but we must never set light by the promises of God. “He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” So, beloved Brothers and Sisters, if there is a promise of God to help you in a time of trouble, or to preserve you in the hour of temptation, or to deliver you out of trial, or to give you Divine Grace according to your day—that promise is as good as if it had been already performed since God’s Word shall certainly be followed by the fulfillment of it in due season! I beseech you, then, as you read the promise, to say to yourself, “It is done as God has said.” If any man of means, with whom you do business, gives you his check for the amount he owes you, do you not say that he has paid you? Yet he has not handed to you even a penny in cash—no notes or gold and silver coins have passed between you—but you rightly say that he has paid you because his signature on the check is as good as money. And is not God’s Word as good as man’s? Yes, that it is, and far better! Then, so regard it—oh, for faith to do so at this very moment!

Further, what God has spoken shall never be reversed. “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent.” What He has spoken in public, He does not reverse in private. His own declaration is, “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you Me in vain.” Whatever there may be in the sealed scroll that records God’s purposes in predestination, there cannot be anything there to contradict what is written on the open scroll of Divine Revelation. As to the Doctrine of Election which often terrifies seeking souls, it never should do so since there can be nothing, in the secret counsels of God, contrary to the plain promises of God recorded in His Word! He has not said, “Yes,” in one place, and, “No,” in another. And if He says, “Yes,” today, He will not say, “No,” tomorrow. He Himself said long ago, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Once let any message go forth out of His mouth and it shall stand fast forever!

Oh, then, what a firm foundation for faith this is! First, “God has spoken,” and that is as good as if He had already done as He has said! And, secondly, “God has spoken,” and that which He has said can never be reversed! If there is a promise in the Bible made to a penitent sinner—and you are a penitent sinner—that promise must be kept to you! If there is a blessing promised to a believing soul and you are a believing soul—that blessing is sure to you. If God has promised to sustain you when you cast your burden upon Him, and to bring you through the furnace with your hair unsinged, He will do it, for He has never yet been false to His promise and He never will be! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His Word shall ever fail. It stands, as an immutable decree, that Jehovah’s will shall be done—and this is Jehovah’s will—that, of all that He has promised to the sons and daughters of men, not one syllable shall ever fail! Oh, how blessedly faith ought to rest on such a foundation as this!

Our text says, “God has spoken in His holiness.” Now, it sometimes happens that our greatest difficulty in believing a promise of God lies in His holiness. There is, for instance, a promise of pardon to the soul that believes in Jesus. We think of stern Justice, with her majestic, yet severe look. In our heart of hearts we reverence her and we ask, “How can God be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly?” We have, at times, had some idea of the perfect purity of God—the purity of Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean and who charges His angels with folly. We have trembled, sometimes, as though we were dissolved into nothingness when we have thought of His spotless purity—and we have said, “Can this holy God really mean to receive such sinners as we are whose very clothes, as Job says, abhor us? Can He purpose to bring us to His own right hand in Glory that we may be among the courtiers in His heavenly Kingdom?” Yes, He does mean to do even that! Yet the thought of His purity makes us wonder how it can be done.

Now, the joy of David was that when God spoke concerning that glorious—  
*“Stem of Jesse’s rod”—*

He spoke it “in His holiness,” that is, in His whole-ness, with His whole perfectly pure Nature. He knew all that David then was and all that David would be, yet He saw it to be consistent with His infinite perfections to make, even with such a man, “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, when the Lord entered into Covenant with Christ concerning those whom He gave to Him to be His portion forever and when, in that Covenant, He wrote down blessings exceedingly great and precious—and made promises so vast that we cannot, at present, form any estimate of their full value—He knew quite well what He was doing and He did it, knowing all about your doubts and fears concerning your sinfulness and His own holiness! And now, without in the least marring His perfect purity and inflexible justice, “God has spoken in His holiness” to poor lost sinners and said that He will save all of them who trust in Jesus Christ, His Son! And He has also “spoken in His holiness” to His poor imperfect children and said that He will bless them, and that He will not turn away from them to do them good. This is the Covenant that He has made with His people—“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. And you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” All this, which “God has spoken in His holiness,” He will do without obscuring that wondrous attribute, or marring the glory of His adorable perfections!

II. Now, in the second place, let us notice THE JOY OF FAITH—“God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice.”  
Are any of you heavy of heart just now? If so, I hope you will catch the spirit of David when he uttered these words. You ought to be glad that “God has spoken in His holiness,” and you will be glad if you feel and know that He has spoken to you. “God has spoken; I will rejoice.”  
Observe that this joy, which faith has, is a joy in the very fact that God has spoken. Though nothing may yet have been done for us, God has spoken and, therefore, our heart rejoices! Every Divine promise, if it is rightly viewed by faith, will make the heart leap for joy. Suppose you do not need that particular promise just now, rejoice all the same, for you will need it by-and-by. If the promise is not made especially to you, yet it is made to somebody—therefore rejoice that “God has spoken” so as to meet the needs of somebody else’s case. What if the blessing is too high for you to reach at present? Nevertheless, rejoice that there are mercies stored up for future and more advanced stages of your spiritual growth. And suppose the mercy is one that you long ago enjoyed? Still be glad that you enjoyed it in years past and so rejoice that “God has spoken.” Oh, what hymns of praise there are in this blessed Book if this is the theme of our song—“God has spoken”! Then the very first pages of Genesis ought to make us rejoice and we will rejoice because we know how He made the worlds. Pass along through every page and feast your eyes upon every line of every page—and say all the while, “‘God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice.’ This shall be the subject of my joy all day long and, in the night watches, will I rejoice in His Word.”  
You perceive, as I have said, that this joy comes to the Believer even before the promise is literally fulfilled to him. It is the joy of faith. You have not yet had the promise fulfilled to your sight, but, seeing that it is fulfilled to your faith, begin to be glad about it! Praise the Lord for all the good things He has laid up in store for you! Take upon your lips the words of that sweet singer who wrote—  
*“And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set—  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.”*  
When you are ill, bless God for the health you will enjoy when you get well! When you are down-hearted, bless God for the joy that you will have when He shall again lift up the Light of His Countenance upon you! When you go to the grave of a Christian friend, bless God because you will meet that friend again! Though you cannot yet see the joys that await you inside the gates of pearl, begin to bless the Lord for all that He has prepared for them that love Him! Borrow from the eternal future—you may, for there is plenty of it. There is an infinity of joy, therefore, antedate it a little while. Send your messengers across the Jordan to bring you some of the Eshcol clusters. You may do so, for they are yours and you may have some of them, even now, as foretastes of the bliss that is yet to be revealed. “God has spoken” to His servants of the great things that He will do for them for many years to come and throughout eternity! He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” He has said, “Where I am, there shall also My servant be.” Therefore, as “God has spoken,” though as yet my soul abides in the land of darkness, drought and barrenness, yet, because He will fulfill His promise, my heart shall rejoice! David says, in the 11th verse of this Psalm, “O God, who hast cast us off,” yet here, though he is one of the cast-offs, he says, “God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice.”  
Perhaps I am addressing a minister whose public labors are apparently unsuccessful. My Brother, you have been exceedingly grieved because your people have been like the children of Ephraim who “being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.” Well now, you must not give way to discouragement, or fall into a dull and sad state of mind. You must say, ‘God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice.’ Though I have not, as yet, seen any success attending my efforts, He has said, ‘They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,’ and I believe I shall do so, for I have often sowed in tears and sowed the good Seed of the Kingdom with many tears and many prayers. Therefore, though I seem, at present, like one of the cast-offs, and little good has come of all that I have done, yet, ‘God has spoken in His holiness’ and, therefore, I will rejoice.’”  
I may be speaking to a Brother or Sister who is tried in another way. You, dear Friend, have not enjoyed the means of Grace as you used to do. You blame yourself for the change and it is right and proper that you should do so. You have not now those happy experiences that you once had—neither do you enjoy such blessed visits from your Lord as you had a year or so ago. You know that the fault lies with you. Still, remember that faith is never dependent upon feeling and our confidence is never to rest upon our inward condition. Otherwise it rests on the shifting sand. But, if this is the case with you, now is the time for you to exercise faith and to say, “Though I am, as it were, a cast-off and the Word of the Lord is not just now solacing my heart, yet, ‘God has spoken,’ and, sinner as I am, if I am not a saint, I trust to what God has said to believing sinners and ‘I will rejoice,’ even though I seem to be only a cast-off.”  
Once more, notice that David, at the time he wrote this Psalm, had discovered the vanity of human confidence. He says, in the 12th verse, “Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.” “My best friend has proved to be a traitor; he that ate bread with me has lifted up his heel against me. Those who said that they would never leave me and who never did leave me while there was anything to be gotten out of me, are all gone. I said in my haste, ‘All men are liars,’ but ‘God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice.’” It is grand faith that can rejoice in God when friends go as the swallows fly away in the autumn, or drop off as the leaves fade when the summer comes to an end! That was the kind of faith that Habakkuk had when he sang, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

This is a good crutch for Mr. Ready-to-Halt—no, better than that, surely this will take Ready-to-Halt’s crutches away and enable him to run without weariness in the ways of the Lord! Why, Brothers and Sisters, here are the wings of eagles for you, if you only know how to use them! “God has spoken.” What a mighty power your soul will have in prayer if you go to God and say, “Do as You have said.” What a sword this is to flash in the face of the foe—“God has spoken.” “It is written” is that which makes old Rome tremble and her seven hills to quake for fear! Get a rejoicing grip of this great Truth of God and the dwarf shall become a giant, the feeblest among us shall be as David and the house of David shall be like the angel of the Lord!  
III. The latter part of the text shows us THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH— “God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth.”  
That is, David says, “As God has given me these places to be parts of my kingdom, I will go and take possession of them.” Some people’s socalled faith is of this order—God has promised a great blessing! Let us go—and sleep.” Their philosophy is—God’s promise will be sure to be fulfilled—therefore, let us eat and drink, and not trouble at all about the matter. The Lord will have His own people and He will carry out His own purposes and decrees. They stand fast forever, so the best thing for us is to do nothing at all! God says that there shall be a harvest—so there is no need for our sowing and we can stay in bed as late as we like.” That is the kind of fatalism that many carry even into their Christianity—they make the eternal purposes and blessed promises of God to become reasons for inaction! But it is not so with any sane child of God. He girds up his loins and says, “God has spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth.”  
Whenever you look into the Word of God and read what “God has spoken” to you, see that you appropriate it. Suppose that He has promised you comfort—do not rest satisfied without that comfort. Suppose He has promised you joy and peace in believing—never rest till you have that joy and peace. Suppose He has promised you complete sanctification, full deliverance from the power of evil—do not be satisfied till you are delivered from it all. Never say, “Ah, that is a constitutional sin—that is the result of my temperament.” No, Brother, Sister, if the Lord has promised you the victory over your enemies, be not satisfied till you have planted your foot on their necks and they are in subjection to you. Some Christian people are living, spiritually, on a penny a week, when their income might be ten thousand a day! You might live like kings, yet you are starving like paupers! Your faith might lay hold on God’s exceedingly great and precious promises and so fill her mouth with good things, but, instead of doing so, you are quivering with the palsy of unbelief and so not grasping what God has put within your reach! There lies Succoth, but you do not mete it out. There lies Shechem, but you do not divide it. Yet they are both of them yours by Divine donation! Oh, if our faith did but really grip the promises and believe in the promise-keeping God, she would never rest till she possessed all the blessings that are really hers!  
I think that every young Christian should say, when he joins the Church, “Now, I do not want to be merely an average Christian. I am nothing and less than nothing in myself, but, if there is any blessing to be had from God I will have it. If I can have a closer walk with God than others have, I will have it. If there is more of Christ’s likeness to be had than others possess, I will have it. By God’s Grace, ‘I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth!’ If God has given me permission to take anything, why should I not have it?” If you have leave given you to go to Windsor Castle, or Buckingham Palace as often as you like and to take whatever you please that is there, and to be treated as a prince, I guarantee that you would not need anyone to remind you that you had not been to either place for weeks! If you had such privileges accorded to you, you would be sure to avail yourselves of them. Yet here are the gates of the palace of prayer always open to you and the doors of communion never shut against you—and Jesus, the great King of kings, not only inviting you to come to Him, but even urging you to abide in Him and never to depart from Him—yet, alas, you do not have fellowship with Christ by the month together! Be no longer like the starving professors that, now and then, taste a little of the heavenly manna, but, generally, live on the leeks, the garlic and the onions of Egypt.  
So, if we have faith in God, we ought to take possession of all that is ours and, further, we ought to know what we really possess. It is delightful to see David here mentioning his various possessions—“I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine. Manasseh is mine. Ephraim is also the strength of my head. Judah is my law-giver, Moab is my washpot. Over Edom will I cast out my shoe. Over Philistia will I triumph. Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?” Perhaps you say, “That is very uninteresting—I do not understand it.” No, but David did. He had seen Shechem and he knew that it was a place worth possessing. And Gilead and Manasseh and all the other places interested him even if they do not interest you. And when a child of God looks over his spiritual treasures and mentions them one by one, he takes an interest even in the very mention of them. The Bible is a dull book to a person who has no part or lot in it. There is no drier reading, in all the world, than the reading of a will in which one has no interest—but there is nothing that would interest you more than listening to the will of your old uncle in which he had left you a large fortune! You would lean forward and you would put your hand to your ear lest you should lose any of it, and you would think that you had never heard a more eloquent discourse than that! And when a man gets to know what “God has spoken,” what He has written for him in this blessed Book which contains His will—every word is music to him and he is ready to pick out some of the choicest words and say, “Regeneration is mine! Justification is mine! Adoption is mine! Sanctification is mine! Union to Christ is mine! Resurrection is mine! Eternal life is mine! Yes, all things are mine!” And he would dwell upon each one with a holy unction, at least to his own soul.  
Then, if you know what God has given you, mind that you use it all. What does David say? “Moab is my washpot. Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.” As an Oriental who is weary, throws his sandals to one servant and then puts his foot out, that another servant may wash it with flowing water, so David says, “I will use Moab and Edom as my servitors.” Now, Christian, if you have true faith and mean to do real business with God and for Him, say to yourself, “I have this, and that, and the other blessing—and I am going to use them all for His Glory. I have been adopted by God. I am His child, so I will plead with Him and will get all I can from my Father to use in His service! I am justified, I have peace with God, so I will go forth and, in the power of that peace, I will let others see what bliss Christians know! Then I also have sanctification given me in Christ, so I will use that and seek to be a true saint, that my life may be a blameless, holy, gracious, Christ-like life. By God’s Grace I will not have even one unused privilege!  
Once more, David, being in the spirit of full faith in God, now manifests the spirit of enterprise, for he says, “God has given me Edom—then I will have it. There is that strong city of Petra, the rock city. It is like an eagle’s nest upon a crag—who is the bold man that can capture it and take the spoil? The fierce sons of Edom, in the gorge, will be sure to slay the first men who dare to march into that rocky chasm.” “Who will bring me into the strong city?” he asks, “who will lead me into Edom?” The spirit of enterprise and of conquest is in his soul! And then he adds, “Will not You, O God, go forth with our hosts?” “Since You have spoken as You have done, You will surely lead us to victory.” In like manner, every man who has faith in God’s Word ought to be a man of enterprise. I wonder, Brothers and Sisters, how many of you have any enterprise for God in view just now—storming some rocky sin, some Petra-like evil in your soul that seems almost impregnable! You know that your Savior’s name is “Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Then, in the strength of that name, go up and kill your bosom sin and your constitutional sin—and never rest till you have driven your dagger through every evil that lurks within your soul!  
Then think what room for enterprise you have among your fellow men. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof,” yet vast multitudes of mankind still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Have any of you enterprise enough to go up against the strong cities that are still in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ? Can any of you go and look after those who walk the streets—and seek to bring them to Christ? That would be conquering Edom itself. Have any of you enterprise enough to go down into the slums and dens of London to seek out the poorest and the vilest of the people? Have you confidence enough to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ can give you that Petra-like city, that dark spot where thieves congregate, where blasphemy is the current language and where profanity seems even to pollute the very air? Have you “pluck” enough to undertake such an enterprise as that? Is there manliness enough in any one of you to attempt it? Then, having asked the question, “Who will lead me into Edom?” do not forget to pray, “Will not You, O God? You have spoken; will You not also act, through Your people, so that all flesh may see the salvation of God?”

Let each child of God say, “O my Father, I believe that weak and feeble as I am, my weakness and feebleness need be no hindrance to me if I go to Your service in Your strength! You have spoken in Your holiness; I will rejoice and, in Your name, I will conquer the foe, and gather the spoil for You.” “Through God,” says David, in the 13th verse, “we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies.” Therefore, if you believe in God, hasten to the spoil of His enemies! Be strong! If you really are linked with Omnipotence, prove it! Do not talk about it, but let your deeds show that the Lord of Hosts is with you and that the God of Jacob is your refuge. If, indeed, the Lord’s arm is with you, smite as the Lord would smite! If, indeed, He speaks through you, speak as He would speak! Be strong, very courageous and press forward in the name of God! Set up your banners and who knows whether even this feeble message of mine, in rousing you to action upon the basis of confidence in the Word of God, may not cast down some stronghold of the enemy and make the walls of some mighty Jericho to fall flat to the ground? The Lord grant it for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALMS 57:7-11; 108.

Let me say, before we begin our reading, that the 108th Psalm is made up partly of the 60th and partly of the 57th, yet we are sure that the Holy Spirit is not short of language so that He needs to repeat Himself. It is always a pity to think that any portion of Scripture can be repetitious. It cannot be! There is some good reason for every repetition and you will see that in the two Psalms which we are about to read, the latter part of the 57th coincides with the first part of the 108th. And also that in the 57th Psalm we have prayer and praise and, in the 108th, we have praise and prayer. It is well that we should see how these two holy exercises can change places—so that sometimes we begin with prayer and pray ourselves up into praise and, at other times we begin with praise and find in it the strength we need to aid us in prayer.

Psalm 57:7. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Let the lions open their cruel mouths and roar, and let wicked men, “whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,” do their worst against me—let my every footstep be among the nets and pits that they have set and dug to catch me. Even in the midst of danger, “my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I still sing and give praise.”

8. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. “I will awake the dawn”—so the Hebrew has it—“I will wake up the morning and chide it for being so long in opening its eyes to look upon God’s works!” David did this, notwithstanding all the trials of his surrounding circumstances. He calls on his “glory”—perhaps he means his tongue—possibly his poetic faculty—perhaps his musical skill. It may be that he means his intellect. Whatever his “glory” is, he calls upon his highest powers to awake to praise his God. Then he takes his psaltery and harp—strange companions for a man whose soul is among lions— but saints know how to evoke sweetest music even when their enemies are fighting fiercely against them. And he sings—

9-11. I will praise You, O lord, among the people: I will sing unto You among the nations. For Your mercy is great unto the heavens, and Your Truth unto the clouds. Be You exalted, O God, above the heavens: let Your Glory be above all the earth. Have not some of you found God’s mercy to be “great unto the heavens”? It even seemed to reach above the heavens and, as for God’s Truth, you followed it till you could follow it no further, for it had ascended above the clouds! We could scarcely, I think, ever expect to understand, here, all the Truth which God has pleased to let us hear or read. It reaches “unto the clouds” and there we must leave it for the present. When God ceases to reveal anything, we may cease to enquire concerning it.

I saw, in Florence, a picture of “The Sleeping Savior.” He is represented as sleeping in the manger at Bethlehem and the artist depicts the angels hovering round Him with their fingers on their lips as though they would not wake Him from His holy slumbers. So, when God bids the Truth of God sleep, do not try to wake it! There is enough revealed for you to know and more that you will know, by-and-by, so pry not between the folded leaves, but wait your Lord’s appointed time to teach you more of His will.

Psalm 108:1-5. O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise You, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto You among the nations, for Your mercy is great above the heavens: and Your Truth reaches unto the clouds. Be You exalted, O God, above the heavens: and Your Glory above all the earth. Here we begin with praise—the very praise with which we finished the other Psalm—praise in a very joyous, confident spirit, for the praise which precedes prayer has more of the “Jubilate” note in it than ordinary praise has. The prayer in Psalm 57:1 which preceded the praise, was earnest, and fervent and confident, yet it did not reach so high a note as this.

6-9. That Your beloved may be delivered: save with Your right hand, and answer me. God has spoken in His holiness, I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my law-giver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph. David is claiming the kingdom which God promised to him by the mouth of Samuel the Prophet—looking first upon the kingdom, itself, and then upon the surrounding territories, and laying hold upon them all as his own because God had given them to him.

10. Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? In the spirit of a truly courageous leader, he means to fight with that ancient foe of Israel and, wisely, appeals to God to lead his army.

11-13. Will not You, O God, who has cast us off? And will not You, O God, go forth with our hosts? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2724 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE DEW OF CHRIST’S YOUTH  
NO. 2724

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, APRIL 28, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1859.

**“You have the dew of Your youth.”  
Psalm 110:3.**

WHEN you have walked in the garden, early in the morning, you must have noticed the singular freshness and beauty which a summer’s morning always seems to give to the earth. The dewdrops, like tears standing in the eyes of the flowers, as if they wept for joy to see the sun again after the long night of darkness, sparkle in the sun! The greenness of vegetation has about it a more than emerald hue and every “thing of beauty” looks more beautiful in the morning than at any other season. You have gone out again, perhaps, at noon, and you have noticed how dry and dusty everything appears, for the sun has risen and by his burning heat he has exhaled the dew and the freshness of the morning has departed in the drought of noon. Now, this is just a picture of all things here below— yes, and also a picture of ourselves. When we first behold many things, they have the dew upon them and they sparkle, but in a little while all their brightness is gone and their brilliance scattered. Some of you have entered into pleasure and you have found it a delusion—you have intermeddled with all kinds of knowledge and you have found that in the making and reading of books, there was much pleasure, but, before long you have discovered that in reading many books and in making them, there was no end and much study was a weariness to the flesh.

Everything terrestrial has its dew in the morning, but its burning heat at noon, and we too, Beloved—I mean those of us who have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit—is not this too much the case even with us? When we were first converted, what a sparkling dew there was upon our leaf! We could not sing God’s praises loudly enough! We could not sufficiently leap for joy before the Ark of the Lord. All the exultations of those who came before seemed utterly insufficient for us. There was, to us, such unction and savor in the Word of God that we could feast upon it everyday—yes, and all night long—and yet never be weary! We ran in the way of God’s Commandments without weariness and we mounted aloft as on the wings of eagles and never thought that we could ascend too high. But, alas, Beloved, is it not the case with many of us that much of that early freshness of the morning of our youth is scattered, and some, at least, of our excellence has proved to be like the early cloud and the morning dew? Though in some things we trust that we have grown, yet we are compelled to confess that in some other things we have diminished. While in the depths of self-knowledge we feel that we have made progress, yet in the heights of joy in Christ, in the sublimities of a full devotion to Him, we sometimes fear that we have gone backward and that we have not the bliss of our youth, the dew of the morning.

Our text, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, says He has the dew of His youth. We are certain that it is Jesus Christ who is spoken of in this Psalm, for, in arguing with the Pharisees, He quoted the first verse and applied it to Himself—“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit you at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.” So that no doubt this third verse also alludes to Him—“Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.” Having, therefore, set ourselves and all terrestrial matters in contrast with Him, it only remains for me to now enter, as fully as God may help me, into the sweet doctrine of this text— that Jesus Christ always has had, and always will have, the early dew, freshness and brilliance of His youth. First, permit me

 to state the fact. Secondly, to show the reasons for it. And, thirdly, to deduce the lessons from it.

I. First of all, let me STATE THE FACT, THAT CHRIST HAS THE DEW OF HIS YOUTH.  
Let me first speak of Christ personally. Has He not all the freshness, all the vigor, all the strength of ancient times? His goings forth were of old, even from eternity and, behold, He still goes forth, everyday, in the preaching of His Word, and in the ministrations of His Spirit. In the chariots of salvation He still rides forth and among the golden candlesticks He still walks. Have we ever imagined that He has lost the strength of His youth? Do His steps falter? Has His arm begun to feel the palsying influence of old age? Is there any sign of decrepitude or of wasting away upon His majestic brow? When John saw Him in Patmos, “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow,” for He is the Eternal of Ages! Yet, as says the spouse in the Canticles, “His locks are bushy, and black as a raven,” for He has the strength of a youth, while He has the ages of eternity upon Him! Well might He now rise up before us and ask concerning Himself personally, “Is My ear heavy that I cannot hear? Is My arm shortened that I cannot save? Am I not today what I was yesterday? Was I the Creator of the world? Did I speak it out of nothingness and am I not still its Sustainer? Was I the Redeemer of the Church? Did I purchase her with My own blood and do not still sustain with power those whom I redeemed with blood? Did I not on earth, with cries and groans, offer up My prayer before My Father and do I not now plead, not with less vigor but with greater strength, when with authority I advocate My people’s cause before His Throne?”  
Nor is this freshness confined to Christ in His Person—it is the same if you think of Him as revealed in His doctrine. We have Christ among us now, not Incarnate in flesh, but Incarnate in doctrine. The Doctrines of Grace are, in a certain sense, the body of Christ. We speak sometimes of a Body of Divinity, but if any man would know what the true Body of Divinity is, let him learn that it is neither Calvin’s “Institutes,” nor Dwight’s “Theology,” nor Gill’s “Body of Divinity”—it is Christ who is the Body of Divinity! His was the only body Divinity ever took when it became Incarnate. But taking Divinity, in another sense, to mean Divine Doctrine, what Christ said and what He did—that is, the Gospel—is the only body which Divinity ever will take!  
The Gospel is always fresh. There are many subjects, Beloved, that get exhausted after awhile, but who ever heard of the Gospel being exhausted? You have, some of you, come up to the House of God these 30 or 40 years—did you ever feel that you needed anything newer than the Gospel? Did you ever say, as you went out, after you had heard a Gospel sermon, “I would like to have some improvements made upon it”? No! If you have heard God’s Truth proclaimed, have you not said, “That was the food of my childhood in Grace, it is my food now that, by reason of years, I am able to discern between that which is good and that which is evil—and it shall be my food all through the wilderness—and until I eat of the corn of the Kingdom on the other side of Jordan”?  
It is a wonderful thing, I have often thought, that any man should be able, day after day, and week after week, to attract thousands of people to hear him talk. I do not believe any man could do it with any other subject except the Gospel. I have the most intense respect for that great man and mighty orator, Mr. Gough, but, with all his ability, if he were to deliver a teetotal lecture twice every Sabbath, in any pulpit in England, he could not command a congregation for 21 years at a stretch! But the Christian minister, with only one subject—Christ Crucified—may not only keep on for 21 years, but if he should live as long as Methuselah, he might still keep on preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified—and he would still find that the people of God would come to hear him and never crave for a fresh subject! Let any great historian open, if he pleases, a lecture room and attempt to deliver two lectures upon history every week, and let him see whether he does not find the congregation which might, at first, gather around him, speedily diminished!  
We have had an instance, in London, of one who has delivered an amusing lecture a thousand times, always to great multitudes, but then they were different persons every time. No one thought of going to hear him lecture upon the same subject the whole thousand times—it would have become a most intolerable penance even to have heard Albert Smith delivering his lecture upon Mont Blanc so often, however interesting it might have been once or twice. It would certainly pall upon the mind if we heard it so many times—but the Christian minister may keep on, and on, and on with the same theme—Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, the same Cross, the same crown of thorns, the same bleeding wounds—from the first time that he enters his pulpit to the last when he lays down his charge—and the people may always say, and he can always feel—that the Gospel has the dew of its youth upon it and is always fresh and new!  
Our text is also specially true of Christ as revealed in the Bible. There are many other valuable books that have been written, but, as a rule, however valuable they may be, when you have read them half-a-dozen times, you may be quite satisfied that you need not read them anymore. Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is John Bunyan’s, “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and I imagine I may have read that through perhaps a hundred times. It is a book of which I never seem to tire, but then the secret of that is, that John Bunyan’s, “Pilgrim’s Progress,” is the Bible in another shape. It is the same heavenly water taken out of this same well of the Gospel, yet you would tire even of that book at last. You would say, “I know all that this volume contains and I need something more. Here is the experience of the Christian pilgrim—I know it is true, and I delight in it, but I want to go somewhat further.” The mind would crave for something else. But read the Bible and, strange to say, the more you read it, the more satisfied you will be with it. When you begin to read the Bible, perhaps you need 50 other books in order that you may become a thorough Bible student, but your library will gradually diminish until, at last, the more you understand the Bible, the fewer books you will need, and you will come to say, “If I might have all my days over again, this should be the only book that I would study. And I would concentrate all my powers upon the understanding of this one volume.”  
You can get to the bottom of all other books—you dive into them and, at first, they seem to be very deep—but every time you plunge, they appear to get shallower and shallower until, at last, you can see the bottom at a glance. But in God’s Word, every time you dive, the depths grow deeper! The first time you read a text, in your ignorant conceit you fancy you have learned the full meaning of it. But you look at it again and you find that though you had the meaning in one sense, yet you had not the full meaning—and you dive again, and again, and again—and you find, each time you dive, that the meaning is still far beyond your reach and that the Bible is altogether above your comprehension! It expands, it grows, it continually increases in interest.  
There is such a charm about the Bible, that he who reads it but little can never feel the full force of it. It is something like the maelstrom you have heard of, only in a different and more excellent sense. The maelstrom is a great whirlpool on the coast of Norway. A ship, at a long distance from it, will feel something of its attractive influence—a very little, yet enough to make it veer from its course. But the nearer it gets to the whirlpool, the stronger becomes the current and the more forcibly is the vessel carried along by it, until, at last, the ship is drawn near, whirled round at a tremendous rate, and then engulfed in its depths. In a higher and better sense, the same is true of the Bible. The nearer you go to it, the more closely you study it, the more voraciously you devour its contents, the more rapidly do you revolve in its circles until, at last, you are swallowed up in its glory and seem to long for nothing else than to prove the heights and depths of this unfathomable bliss —the love of God in Christ Jesus as revealed to us in His sacred Word! Truly, we may say to the Bible, “You have the dew of your youth.”  
Again, I may add, everything that has to do with Christ is always young. The beds of spices where He lies are always green. The trees planted by Him will never wither, their fruits will always come to perfection. Everything lives where He is, for He is Life and in Him there is no death at all. And because He is Life, He is always full of freshness and, therefore, does He scatter living force wherever He goes. All this we shall best know when we shall follow Him to the living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.  
II. Now let us turn to the second point and inquire, WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS FRESHNESS? What is the reason why Christ Jesus and His Gospel, and His Word, and all things about Him are always so fresh? Why have we always an abiding dew upon these holy things?  
I answer, first, no man who understands what it is to have Christ in His heart will ever get tired of Him through want of variety. The reason why we get tired of a thing is generally because, as we say, there is a sameness about it. There are many men who have a weighty message to deliver, consisting of very good matter, but, dear me, it is a pain to sit and listen to them because they deliver all their words in a monotone— they always speak as if they were striking a bell—and word follows word, with no difference of tone. Now, the human ear loves variety. It cannot bear monotony. And so is it with the whole of our manhood—nothing monotonous will long retain its freshness. However sweet the music might be, if we always heard the same notes, we would most assuredly be as disgusted with even the music of an archangel, if we were compelled to hear it all day and all night long, as we are with the cackling of a goose! Everything is apt to lose its interest when it is repeated over and over again. But there is no fear of any monotony or tautology in Christ. You may look at Christ a thousand times and you shall have, if you please, a thousand different aspects of His beauty!

If you turn to the Old Testament, you can see Him in a vast variety of forms. You can see Him as the Paschal Lamb and as the Scapegoat. You can see Him at one time as the bullock, strong to labor, and at another time as the lamb, patient to endure. You can see Him as the dove, full of innocence. You can see Him in the blood sprinkled, in the incense burning, in the laver filled with water, in Aaron’s rod that budded, in the golden pot that was full of manna, in the Ark. You can see Him having the Law within His heart and over the Ark. You can see the golden light of the Shekinah above the Mercy Seat, and say, “Christ is here.” In every type you may see Christ, and in so many different shapes, too, that you can say, “Turn this whichever way I like, there is always something fresh in it.” Christ, if I may compare so glorious a Person to so humble a thing, is like the kaleidoscope. As often as you look through it, you see a fresh arrangement of colors and a new design and, in like manner, as often as you look at the Lord Jesus Christ, you always discover some new beauty in Him.  
When you have done with looking at Him typically, look at Him officially. You have not time to consider all His glories as a Priest—you have hardly passed your eyes over His flowing vesture and His glittering breastplate, and listened to the ringing of the bells and marked the beauty of the pomegranates, before you see Him come forth as a King— and you can scarcely stop to look at the many crowns on His head before He comes forth as a Prophet! And you have hardly time to admire Him as a Prophet before He comes forth as Mediator, as Shepherd, as Captain of our salvation, as Head of the Church, as the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. If you go further and look at His Person, you will see what a wonderful variety there is in Him. You see Him as the Child born, the Son given. When He comes into this world, you know Him to be God, and you are lost in admiration of His Deity. You also know Him to be Man and you still stand astonished when you regard Him in that aspect as bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The reason why everything else loses its freshness to us is because of its need of variety. You may go to any exhibition that has ever been opened to attract attention and awaken interest, but you will find that, after a certain time, there is a need of variety in it. But with Christ there never is such a lack and, therefore, to the mind’s eye He always has the dew of His youth.  
There is also another reason Christ has the dew of His youth—because of His excellence. Today, stepping in to see a gentleman, I observed a table which had upon it a great variety of objects. I wondered what they were and took the liberty of asking him. He told me that he had some beautiful stereoscopic views there which had been taken at an immense expense in Egypt, in the Holy Land, and in all parts of the world. He showed me one or two Scriptural subjects which very much interested me. They were certainly preeminently excellent as works of art. He said, “There, Sir, I never get tired of looking at these slides. I could examine them constantly and never be weary of them.” “Well,” I said, “I can quite understand that. They are so excellent, for, really, there is half-an-hour’s study in this one picture—and then one might begin again, it is so full of beauty, and it seems so true to the original.”  
But I thought to myself, “Excellent as they are, I think, if I call to see my friend in a year’s time, he will tell me that he has had to buy a fresh set of views, for he has been looking at these others so often that he has become altogether tired of them.” They would not have any freshness to him because he had seen them so many times. But mark, the reason why he could look at them so often was because they were so excellent. If they had been poor pictures. If there had not been great skill and art bestowed upon them, he would soon have become weary of looking at them. There are some views in nature which a man might gaze upon a hundred times and yet always wonder at them. But the reason is because they are so beautiful. There are other things that might strike one at first, but which, when they were looked into more closely, would lose their freshness because there would be no real ground for admiration, no excellence in them. But Chris Jesus will always have the dew of His youth because He is always so excellent!  
Ah, Brothers and Sisters, you thought Christ was sweet when first you tasted Him, but you will know Him to be sweeter, still, when you know more of Him and taste and see that He is good! But you can never know all His sweetness, for you can eat, and eat, and eat to the fullest and yet not discover it all! Possibly, scarcely in Heaven itself will you know all the sweetness of Christ. You imagine, perhaps, that you know how great is His love to you, but remember, it passes knowledge! You think that you have fully proved His faithfulness, but you have not proved it as you will yet do. All the tests to which you have ever put the Savior, it may be, are but little compared with those that are to come later. You have proved Him with the footmen, you shall soon prove Him with the horsemen. You have proved Him in the land of peace, you shall soon prove Him in the swellings of Jordan.  
But the more you test and try Him, the more shall you discover that He is excellent and worth the proving. And because His excellence shall become more and more manifest, the more you look at Him, you shall say to Him continually, “You have the dew of Your youth. I find You better and better. Fairest of the sons of men, You grow fairer everyday! Bread of Heaven, You become sweeter to my taste every hour! You were once like wafers made with honey—You are now sweeter than angels’ food. Water of Life, you continually grow more cooling to my tongue and more refreshing to my thirst! I loved You as soon as I knew You, but I love You more now. I delighted in You once, but I delight in You more fully now.”  
Still, I do not know but that the most excellent thing you and I have ever seen would, in time, lose its freshness to us because we would discover all its excellence. But Christ will never lose His freshness to us because He is Divine. Whatever is not Divine, in due time must lose its freshness. Suppose the Lord should give to us, to engross our attention and to interest us, the whole fields of space. Suppose, in eternity, the Lord should say, “Now I will give to you the works of My creation to be forever the objects of your attention.” My dear Friends, there is enough in a single flower, the botanist tells us, to occupy a man’s wonder and admiration for a number of years! There is so much skill and wisdom in but a single flower of the field, that a man might look and wonder as long as that. Well, just put together all the flowers and all the creatures of this world, and all the mighty rocks that are full of such marvelous secrets, and imagine that these are to be the objects of our eternal study and interest. I can suppose that a man would exhaust all the knowledge of this world in due time—it might take him thousands upon thousands of years, yet I can imagine that he might so fully examine everything that is noble and grand in this world that, at last, he could sit down, and say, “I know every secret of nature here upon the earth. I have made every rock tell out its story. I have dived into every mine of truth and I have ransacked all its secret treasures—but there are the stars for me yet to look at.”  
So picture the man going from star to star and discovering all the wonders of God in the seemingly boundless universe! Here is a great conception for you—imagine that all these stars were inhabited and all full of fresh wonders! Yet I can understand that, after myriads and myriads of years, all these marvels might be exhausted. Some stupendous mind, growing by that upon which it fed, might at last say, of all the secrets of God’s works, “I know them all. I have found out every wonder and all the storehouses of God’s wisdom have I ransacked.” But, Beloved, Jesus Christ is such a boundless field of knowledge—in Him there is such a gathering up of all the secrets of God that the whole of eternity would be exhausted before we could learn them all! He will have, He must have, forever, the dew of His youth because He is Divine. The wing of knowledge, though it had all the fields of space to fly in, must at last reach a boundary. The ship of wisdom, though it should sail across the sea that seems without a shore—the as yet unnavigated sea of ether— must at last reach a haven.  
But give a man Christ to be the subject of study, the object to awaken his interest and excite his wonder, and then you have, indeed, shot an arrow which shall never reach its mark! It shall fly on, on, on, and shall never stop! You have bid the man plunge into a bottomless ocean! You have launched him, like Noah’s ark, upon a sea without a shore. He may go on, and on, and on, but he can never reach the end of that voyage! Christ must forever be full of interest to him because He is Divine and, therefore, inexhaustible!  
Another reason why Christ will always have the dew of His youth is because He meets all the cravings of our nature. Suppose I am introduced into a place full of the wonderful works of man. I look and I look on—but why is it that I get tired of them, however interesting they may be? Because they only appeal to my eyes. But suppose that there is the sweetest music at the same time, then I have something for my ears. Why is it that, even then, I get tired? Because I have another craving—I hunger and I thirst. But suppose I have the richest dainties set before me and I sit and feast, and look, and hear sweet sounds all the time? Why is it that, even then, I would, after a time, however excellent might be the entertainment, grow tired? Why, because I have other propensities that are not brought into play and other desires which have not their fair room for exercise.

But suppose I become like Solomon, so that I have all which the eyes, or the ears, or the passions can delight in? Should I, after all, be tired? Yes! Solomon tried it, and said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Why? Because there were other cravings in Solomon which all these things did not satisfy. His mind was hungering after knowledge and when Solomon satisfied that, for he spoke of all things, from the hyssop on the wall up to the cedar of Lebanon, there was one thing that was still not satisfied— that was his soul. His immortal spirit was longing for communion with his God! There was a hunger and thirst after something higher than mere mental food. His mind could not be content with wine to drink and meat to eat, for it needed knowledge. And his spirit could not be satisfied with mere knowledge, for it needed something higher than that—the ethereal and celestial ambrosia of the glorified! His spirit was panting for communion with God and, therefore, Solomon felt that all here was vanity because it could not satisfy that craving.  
Give me Christ and I have no desire for anything beyond Him, for Christ is All! Whatever of good we may wish for, it is all in Christ—it is impossible for the mind that is filled with Christ to imagine anything else! And in the day when we shall get to Heaven—we talk a great deal about golden harps, golden crowns and golden streets—I imagine we shall find that all those harps and crowns and streets are contained in that one word, “Christ.” When we really have Christ, we feel that we have nothing else that we can wish for. He that drinks, desires to eat, but he that drinks Christ drinks food. He that eats desires to be clothed, but he that feeds on Christ is clothed at the same time. He that is clothed needs something wherewithal to adorn himself, but he that is clothed in the righteousness of Christ is robed in the court dress of Heaven and has all the jewels of Divinity upon him! He that is adorned yet needs something wherewithal to wash himself and keep himself beauteous. But he that is clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and adorned with God’s Grace, is washed and is clean every whit. He that is clean needs to be kept clean— and he that has Christ shall be kept clean!  
Dear Friends, there is nothing that a sinner can need, there is nothing that a saint can need that is not in Christ! There are many things that we think we need that are not in Him, but nothing we really need that is not in Him, for “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” And the fullness of the Godhead must be more than sufficient fullness for manhood. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” And if all fullness cannot meet our needs, what can? Therefore, shall we never be weary of Christ because every craving of the heart is satisfied in Him.  
I will mention only one other reason why Christ will always have the dew of His youth. We shall never be tired of Christ because the need that we have of Christ can never cease. While I am on earth, I shall never cease sinning—therefore I shall never cease to need the fountain filled with blood where I can wash away all my guilty stains. So long as I am here, my conscience will never leave off accusing me—therefore I shall always need an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous. While I am here, I shall never be free from trouble—therefore I shall always need Him who is the Consolation of Israel. While I am here, I shall never get rid of weakness—therefore I can never bear to be without Him who is my strength. While I am here, I shall never, I fear, cease from backsliding in some measure—therefore I can never cease to love Him who restores my soul and leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.  
You have heard, perhaps, the story of a party of travelers who were crossing the desert. They had exhausted all their supply of water and they knew not where they should find any. But, at last, after some days’ march, they came near a turbid stream of the most filthy water and in dashed the camels and defiled it still worse! Yet the poor travelers, who had come across the arid desert, were so thirsty that they drank what was more earth than water, and thought it sweeter than any wine they had ever tasted! But after they had satisfied their thirst, did they still think so? Did they then say the water was sweet? No, they understood, then, what it was they had been drinking and, after their thirst was once quenched, you could not have compelled them to drink there again until the thirst returned in all its force. And as long as the Christian is here, he will always have the pangs of hunger, he will always have all the sufferings of spiritual thirst if Christ is removed from him and, therefore, that longing will always make Christ sweet to Him. Our Lord must always have the dew of His youth upon Him, because we shall always have an appetite for Him as long as we are here. Or if we lose it for a little while—for fools will abhor all manner of meat sometimes—yet that appetite must and shall return and we shall again fly to those Living Waters as with the wings of a dove, and hasten again to those cooling streams with all the speed of the panting hart that longs after the water brook, for it must drink or die. Therefore, Beloved, you see yet again that because we shall always need Christ, therefore will He always be fresh to us.  
“But,” says one, “we shall not need Him in Heaven.” Who told you that? Whoever told you so has certainly misled you. Not need Christ in Heaven? Why, Beloved, if you could take Christ away from Heaven, you would take Heaven away, altogether, and leave every saint in Hell! They do not “need” Christ in Heaven, in one sense of the word, because they have Him—therefore they do not “need” Him as the Scotch use the word “need.” But they still need to have Christ with them every hour, for He is the sum and substance of Heaven. If I shall not need Christ to cleanse me in Heaven, yet I shall need Christ to commune with me. If I shall not need His blood to wash me, yet I shall need the offering of praise wherewith to bless and honor God. If I shall not need to pray to Him, I shall need to praise Him. If I shall not need Him to forgive me, yet I shall need Him to embrace me. If I shall not need Him as a Shepherd, I shall need Him as a Husband, as a Priest, as a King so that I may forever serve Him with joy and gladness!  
III. WHAT ARE THE LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THIS TRUTH?  
The first is for the pulpit, a lesson of admonition. Dear Brothers, we who occupy the pulpit must take care that we never, for a moment, entertain the idea that the Gospel has become worn out. It still has the dew of its youth. There is a good deal of nonsense talked about a Gospel adapted to the times. People say that the way Whitefield preached and the way that John Berridge and Rowland Hill preached was all wrong. True, many sinners were converted under their ministry, but, you know, sinners were different, then, from the sinners of these day, who do not need the same sort of preaching. Some say that the devil himself is improved, but I find him worse if anything—improved the wrong way! They say that sinners are improved and do not need to be addressed with the same fiery, burning words as of old. They say that they do not need the same simple preaching of Christ. The 19th Century has become so learned that it has advanced beyond the simple knowledge of Christ Crucified! It has become so erudite, that the simplicity of the Gospel is far behind it! It has marched on so far ahead that it has left the Cross miles in the rear!  
Do not believe them for a moment, my dear Brothers—if you want to wake up the people of England, preach the old-fashioned Gospel! If you want to crowd your halls and gather thousands round you, it is the Truth of God as it is in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, that you must preach! As for the manner and style of your preaching, you may leave that to the occasion, but stick to your subject, the simple Gospel in all its freshness and glory. Pentecostal youth shall be seen in the Gospel again when it is preached in all its fullness and purity. I know why some preachers like to be obscure—it is because it gives a man a peculiar kind of popularity. I believe some people like to hear a man whom they cannot understand and some, when they hear a man they can just barely comprehend, are very flattered, because the minister seems to say to them, “Now, you know that you are all very clever people. I must, therefore, preach you a very clever sermon.” And then they feel pleased that the minister should have such a good opinion of them and should think them so clever.  
But when you go to hear some plain blunt man, who just simply tells out the Gospel and who believes that to try to be eloquent when he is preaching would be just as stupid as to paint the rose or to whitewash the lily, then you say, “Well, now, he did not compliment me! Why, he talked to me and all of us as if we had been a common lot of clodhoppers and crossing-sweepers. He told us just the simple story of the Cross and there is nothing flattering in that.” Yes! And, by the Grace of God, I trust that from our pulpits there will never be anything taught that is flattering to you! I hope each one of us will be able to say, with the Apostle Paul, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”  
Be you assured that there will be more unction resting upon the enunciation of the simple Truths of the Gospel—there will be more freshness to the hearers—than there will be upon the most polished oratory garnished with almost seraphic eloquence and elaborated until it grows far beyond the comprehension of ordinary intellects! That lesson is for the pulpit.

The second lesson is a caution, a lesson of self-examination to each one here present. Do you, dear Friend, take less interest in the Gospel than you used to? Do you find that it has become dull to you and that even Christ Himself has lost His freshness to you? Christ has not really lost His freshness, though you may have lost yours. What you should ask yourself is, “Have I found the right Christ? If the Christ I have found has lost His freshness, is it not very likely that I have found a wrong Christ, one of my own making, one of my own conception? For the real Christ is always fresh, always interesting, always new. Have I not either laid hold of the wrong truth, or held it in the wrong way?”  
I said, “the wrong truth.” Have I contradicted myself? Yet that is the palpable contradiction of this age. One man says, “Yes,” and another man says, “No.” I am told that it is uncharitable to say that another man is wrong if I am right, but I cannot make it out how both are to be right, or how yes and no are to be made to agree together. He is a clever man who is able to tie the tails of yes and no together and make them run in the same row! The fact is, if you have lost your interest in the Gospel, it is not the right one that you have received, or else you never really accepted it. If you have lost your interest in Christ, it is because it is not the Christ of God in whom you were interested. It is very probable that if your former zeal and your former delight in Christ have departed, you have made a mistake—and it is well that you should question yourselves very solemnly lest you should be found building upon the sand when you thought you were building upon the Rock of Ages.  
I have just another word to add, and that is, a word of aspiration. If Christ has the dew of His youth upon Him, let us, my dear Friends who serve the Lord Jesus Christ, aspire to show the world that we do too. In the olden times, the dew of Christ’s youth made His people love Him so much that they were ready to die for Him—they gave all their substance to Him—they lived a life of shame and they were prepared to die a death of pain. Now let us prove to the world that Christianity has not lost its ancient vigor, that there is a godly seed yet left in the earth and that the arm of the Church is not withered. Let us prove to the world that as Christ made His people holy in olden times, He makes His people holy now. And that as the religion of Christ made men devoted to Him, zealous for His cause, prepared them to live and helped them to die, it can do so now. It is for you and for me to prove to the world that our religion has not lost its force by letting them see its influence in our daily life! Emulate the noble army of martyrs, the glorious host of confessors! Seek to live like the goodly fellowship of the Prophets and like that noble company of the Apostles! And when you shall live the holy and devoted lives they did, then shall all the world say, “These men have been with Christ, for they have the dew of the youth of Christianity upon them. They are like the early Christians and, therefore, the old religion has not grown old, so as to be likely to depart and pass away.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #74 New Park Street Pulpit 1

A WILLING PEOPLE AND AN IMMUTABLE LEADER  
NO. 74

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 13, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.” Psalm 110:3.**

NEVER has a verse in the Scripture puzzled me more than this to find out its meaning and its connection. In reading it over hastily, at first sight, it may appear very easy. But if you search into it very carefully, you will find you can, with difficulty, string the words together, or give them any intelligible meaning. I have taken down all the commentators I have in my possession—I find they all give a meaning to the words, but not a soul of them—not even Dr. Gill—gives a connected meaning to the whole sentence. After looking at the old translations and employing every means in my power to discover the meaning, I found myself as far off as when I began! Matthew Henry, one of the wisest commentators, certainly the best for family reading, makes the passage read as if it were like this—“Your people shall come willingly in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness. In the womb of the morning you have the dew of Your youth.” That is how he explains it, though he does not say that is the proper translation. He explains the last sentence, “You have the dew of Your youth” as meaning that in early life, from the womb of the morning, young people would give themselves to Jesus Christ. But it is no such thing! There is a colon after the word, “morning,” dividing the sentence. Besides, it does not say, the “people shall be willing. You have the dew of their youth,” as it would read if it were as the expositors understand it. But it says to Christ, “You have the dew of Your youth.” It was not until we had thoroughly looked at the connection of the verse and tried to catch the scope of the Psalm, that we thought we had hit upon its meaning. But even now we shall leave it with your judgment to decide whether or not we have gained the mind of the Spirit, as we hope we have.

The Psalm is a kind of coronation Psalm. Christ is bid to take His Throne. “Sit You at My right hand.” The scepter is put into His hand. “The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.” And then the question is asked, “Where are His people?” For a king would be no king without subjects! The highest title of kingship is but an empty one if there are no subjects to make up its fullness. Where, then, shall Christ find that which shall be the fullness of Him that fills all-in-all? The great anxiety we have is not whether Christ is king or not—we know He is. He is the Lord of Creation and of Providence. Our anxiety is about His subjects. Oftentimes do we ask, “O Lord, where shall we find Your subjects?” When we have preached to hard hearts and prophesied to dry bones, our unbelief, at times, says, “Where shall we find children for Christ? Where shall we find people who will constitute the subjects of His empire?” Our fears are all put to rest by this passage—“Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning.” And by the second promise, “You have the dew of Your youth.” These thoughts are placed here to allay the anxieties of God’s believing people and to let them see how Christ shall, indeed, be king and never lack a multitude of subjects!

First, here is a promise concerning His people. And secondly, here is a promise concerning Christ, Himself—that He shall always be as strong, as fresh, as new and as mighty a Christ as ever!

I. First, we shall look at THE PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST’S PEOPLE. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.” Here is a promise of time—“in the day of Your power.” Here is a promise of people—“Your people.” Here is a promise of disposition—“Your people shall be willing.” Here is a promise of character—“Your people shall be willing in the beauties of holiness.” And here is a majestic figure to show the manner in which they shall be brought forth—by a very bold metaphor, they are said to come out as mysteriously as the dew drops from the womb of the morning! We know not how, but they are produced by God. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness.” In the womb of the morning they shall come.

1. First, here is a promise concerning time. Christ is not to gather in His people every day but on one special day, the day of His power. It is not the day when man feels himself to be the most mighty that souls are gathered—for alas—God’s servants sometimes preach until their selfcomplacency tells them they have been exceedingly eloquent and mighty. And, therefore, it seems sinners must be saved—but there is no promise that in the day of our power we shall ever see men gathered to Christ! There are times, too, when the people seem to have a great power of seeking after God and when they have the power of hearing. But there is no promise that just when an excitement reigns and when there appears to be power in the creature, that such a day shall be the day of God’s ingathering! It is “the day of Your power”—not of the minister’s power, nor of the hearers’.

The day of God’s power—when is it? We take it, it is the day when God pours out His own power upon the minister, so that God’s children are gathered in by his preaching.

There are times, Beloved, when the ordained servant of the living God will have nothing to do in preaching but just to open his mouth and allow the words to flow. He will scarcely need stay to think, but the thoughts will be injected into his mind and while he preaches, he will feel there is a power accompanying his words! His hearers, too, will discern it. Some of them will feel as if they were sitting under a sledgehammer beating on their hearts. Others will feel as if the Truth of God were stealing into their hearts and slaying all their unbelief in such a way that they could not resist the blessed power! It will often happen that God’s children will find an influence and an irresistible might going with the Word of God. They have heard that minister before, they were delighted with him, they trusted that they had been edified and profited, but on that day there was a special striking home—every word fell on good soil—every blow hit the mark! There was no arrow shot which did not go into the center of the soul—there was not a syllable uttered which was not like the Word of Jehovah, Himself, speaking either from Sinai, or Calvary! Have you ever known such times? Have you not felt them when you have been standing or sitting in the House of God? Ah, those are times when God, by the manifestation of Himself, is pleased to enlighten His children, to gather in His people and to make poor sinners willing! There is also a day of power

 in every sinner’s heart. For, alas, the general day of power which occurs to our congregation omits many—many over whom we have to weep—while hundreds shed tears of penitence, other hundreds sit stolid and unmoved! While some hearts leap for very joy, others are bound in the fetters of ignorance and are sleeping the sleep of death! While God is pouring out His Spirit till some hearts are full to the very brim, ready to burst, there are some dry, without a drop of the heavenly moisture! The day of God’s power is a day of personal power in our souls, like that day of Zaccheus when the Lord said, “Make haste and come down.” It is a day, not of argument of man, but a day of Omnipotent power—God working in the heart! It is not a day of intellectual enlightenment, merely a day of instruction, but a day when God shall enter into the heart and, with a mighty hand, shall wrench the will and turn it as He would—shall make the judgment judge righteously, the imagination think as it ought and shall guide the whole soul to Himself! Did you ever think what power that was which God exerts in every individual heart? There is no power like it! Should a man command the mighty waterfalls to congeal and stand in heaps? If they should obey him, he would not have worked a miracle half as mighty as that which God works in the heart when He bids the floods of sin to cease flowing!

Could I command Etna with its flames and smoke to cease its boiling and should it at once be still, I had not worked a deed so mighty as when God speaks to a boiling spirit sending forth fire and smoke and bids it stop! The everlasting God exhibits more power in turning a sinner from the error of his ways, than in the creation of a world or the sustentation of the universe! In the day of God’s power, God’s people shall be willing! Beloved, we also look for a day of power in the coming period of the reign of Jesus Christ. I take it there is a time coming when the feeblest among us shall be as David. When David shall be as the angel of the Lord. The time is approaching when every poor ignorant minister shall preach with power and when every child of God shall be filled with the knowledge of God! We hope for a happy day when Christ shall come and shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to be spread so rapidly that it shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We often cheer ourselves with this subject—if we labor in vain and spend our strength for nothing, now, it will not always be so—the day will come when the fresh wind of the Spirit will fill the sails of the Church and she shall go swiftly along. Yes, the day will come when the feeble hands of the minister shall be as mighty as the hands of the boldest Christian warrior who ever wielded the sword of the Spirit when every word of Christ shall be as ointment poured forth, spreading perfume over a sinful world! When we shall never preach a sermon without effect—when, as the rain comes down and the snow from Heaven, it not only shall not return void but shall water the earth! And having already brought forth and budded, it shall bring forth fruit to the glory of God—that fruit, the destruction of idols and the casting down of all false religions. Happy day, that day of power! Christians! Why do you not pray for it? Why do you not ask that God would give His people might and that Christ may speedily come and find His people willing?

There is, however, another translation to these words. Calvin translates them, “at the time of the assembling of their army,” “an jour die montres.” “In the day of the review.” You sometimes say, “Oh, if a great struggle were to occur, where would be found the men to fight for Christ?” We have heard timid Believers say, “Oh, I am afraid if persecution should set in, we would find very few valiant for the Truth of God—few ministers would boldly come forward to uphold the Gospel of Christ.” No such thing, Believer! Christ’s people will be willing in the day of God’s armies. God never had a battle to fight yet when He could say, “I have no soldiers in reserve.” God never had an arduous campaign in which His armies were insufficient. Once the Prophet said, Zechariah 1:18-21, “Then I lifted up my eyes and saw and behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, what are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spoke, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head—but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.” God had enough men to cut off the horns and to build His house—there were four. And He had the right sort of men ready to do His work. For “carpenters” were ready. Whenever a struggle is approaching, God will find His men! Whenever a battle is to commence, God will find the men valiant for His Truth. Never be afraid that God will not take care of His Church. “Your people shall be willing in the day of God’s battle.” Are you undertaking some noble enterprise? Are you saying, “Here is a grand endeavor to evangelize the world—where shall we find people?” The answer is, “God’s people shall be willing in the day of His armies.”

Some Sunday school teachers are complaining that in their Church, they cannot find enough to canvass the district. Why not? Because they have not enough of God’s people—but God’s people are willing in the day of His armies! We have complained that we cannot get ministers to evangelize. Why not? Because they are not thoroughly imbued with the Master’s Spirit, for His people would be willing in the day of God’s armies when they are needed. They always have willing hearts to be ready for the battle. They do not say, “I must consult flesh and blood.” No, there is the standard—up go God’s soldiers! There is the battle, out go their swords! They are ready for the fight at once! They are always ready in the day of God’s armies. Beloved, fear no struggle, dread no enterprise, neither think that the silver and the gold will be withheld from us—“The silver and the gold are Mine and the cattle on a thousand hills.” Think not, however grand your ideas, that you shall fail therein. God’s people will come forward willingly when He requires their aid. We firmly believe that Truth of God. But we must wait for God’s day. We must pray for God’s day. We must hope for it. We must labor for it. And when it comes, God shall find His people willing, as they ought to be!

2. Next, we have here the promise of a people, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.” Nobody else. Here is a promise that Christ shall always have a people. In the darkest ages, Christ has always had a Church. And if darker times shall come, He will still have His church. Oh, Elijah, your unbelief is foolish. You say, “I, only I, am left alone and they seek my life.” No, Elijah, in those caves of the earth God has His Prophets, hidden by seventies. You too, poor unbelieving Christian, at times you say, “I, even I, am left.” Oh, if you had eyes to see, if you could travel a little, your heart would be glad to find that God does not lack a people! It cheers my heart to find that God has a family everywhere. We do not go anywhere but we find really earnest hearts—men full of prayer. I bless God that I can say concerning the Church, wherever I have been, though they are not many, there are a few who sigh and groan over the sorrows of Israel. There are chosen bands in every Church—thoroughly earnest men who are looking out for and are ready to receive their Master—who cry to God that He would send them times of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord. Do not be too sad. God has a people and they are willing now! And when the day of God’s power shall come, there is no fear about the people. Religion may be at a low ebb, but it was never at such a low ebb that God’s ship was stranded. It may be ever so low, but the devil shall never be able to cross the river of Christ’s Church dry shod. He shall always find abundance of water running in the channel thereof. God grant us Grace to look out for His people, believing that there are some everywhere, for the promise is, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.”

3. We next come to disposition. God’s people are a willing people. Adam Clarke says—“This verse has been woefully perverted. It has been supposed to point out the irresistible operation of the Grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as their Savior.” A Doctrine which he utterly discards. Well, my dear Adam Clarke, we are extremely obliged to you for your remark, but at the same time we think that the text has not been “woefully perverted.” We believe that the text has been very properly used to show that God makes men willing. For if we read our Bibles rightly, we understand that men, by nature, are not willing! There is a text you are extremely fond of which we do not think belongs to you and which says, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” And there is another text we would like to put you and your Brethren in mind of, “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which has sent Me, draw him.” If you would remember that, we think, even though the text does not teach it, you might at least have some respect for the Doctrine. But it says, God’s people shall be willing in the day of God’s power. And if we read it as plain English people, we look upon it as a promise that God will produce a people who shall be willing enough in the day of His power! And from the fact that no man is willing by nature, we infer from this text that there must be a work of His Grace making men willing in the day of God’s power! We do not know whether you think that fair logic. We think it is. We have been accused of having no logic and we are not particularly sorry about that, for we would rather have what men call, dogmatism, than logic! It is Christ’s to prove. It is ours to preach! We leave argument to Christ. For us, we have only to affirm what we see in God’s Word. God’s people are to be a willing people. We can tell who are the children by the fact that they are willing! I preach to many of you times without number. I tell you of Hell. I bid you flee from it. I tell you of Christ—I bid you look to Him—but you are unwilling to do so. What do I conclude from that? Either that the day of God’s power has not yet come, or that you are not God’s people. When I preach with power and the Word is dispensed with unction, if I see you unmoved and unwilling to cast yourselves on Jesus Christ, what do I say? Why, I fear those are not God’s people, for God’s people are willing in the day of His power, willing to submit to Sovereign Grace, to give themselves up into the hands of the Mediator, to hang simply on His Cross for salvation! I ask again what has made them willing? Must it not have been something in Divine Grace which has turned their will? If the will of man is purely free to do right or wrong, I ask you, my Friends, to answer this—if it is so, why do you not turn to God this very moment without Divine assistance? It is because you are not willing and it needed a promise that God’s people

 would be willing in the day of His power!

I think this Word applies not only to their being willing to be saved but willing to work after they are saved. Did you ever know a minister who preached on the Sunday but who at the Prayer Meeting on the Monday night seemed as if he would much rather be at home? And if there was a lecture on Thursday, did not he, poor man, come up as if he were about to perform some enormously hard duty? What do you think of him? Why, you think he is not one of the people of God, else he would be willing! Some persons come to the House of God, but they come just as the slave would to his whipping place—they do not like it—and they are glad to get away again! But what do we say of God’s people—

*“Up to her courts with joys unknown,*

*The sacred tribes repair.”*  
They are a willing people! There is a collection. The Church of God requires some assistance. One man doles out as small a trifle as ever he can, to keep up his respectability. You do not think he exhibits the spirit of a Christian because he is not willing. But Christ’s people are willing! All that they do, they do willingly, for they are constrained by no compulsion but by Grace, alone! I am sure we all can do a thing far better when we are willing than when we are forced. God loves His people’s services because they do them voluntarily. Voluntarism is the essence of the Gospel. Willing people are those whom God delights to have as His servants. He would not have slaves to Grace His Throne, but true men, who, with gladness and joy, should be willing in the day of His power!

4. We shall scarcely have time for a discussion of the whole text, but we must briefly notice the character of these people as well as their dispositions. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.” “They shall be willing in the beauties of holiness.” This is how they shall be clothed—not merely in boldness, but in the beauties of holiness, for holiness has its beauties, its gems, its pearls and what are these? They shall be clothed in the beauties of the holiness of imputed righteousness and of imparted Grace! God’s people are, in themselves, a deformed people, hence their comeliness must be given them. The standard of beauty is saintship. If an angel should descend from Heaven and carry up to God the most beautiful creature he could find, he would not cull earth’s roses. He would not gather her lilies. He would take up to Heaven the fair character of a child of God! Where he found a self-denying hero, where he discovered an ardent disciple—the angel would take him up, exclaiming, “Great God, here is beauty! Take it, this is Your beauty.” We walk along and admire statues and such-like things and we say, “Here is beauty,” but the Christian has on him the true beauty—the beauties of holiness! Oh, you young, you proud, you ask for beauty—but do you know that all the beauties of this earth can do you no good, for you must die and wear a shroud?—

*“Time will rob you of your bloom,  
Death will drag you to the tomb.”*  
But if you have the beauties of holiness, they shall increase and become

fairer and fairer and among the fair angels, you, as fair as they, shall stand decked in your Savior’s righteousness! “Your people shall be willing” to come forward and they shall be the right sort of people. They will be a holy people, arrayed in, “the beauties of holiness.”

5. Now there is a bold metaphor here which we must explain in the last place. The text says, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness.” Now you understand that—but what do the next words mean, “From the womb of the morning?” “Why, from the earliest periods of their lives,” say the commentators, “God’s people shall be willing.” No, it does not mean that! There is a bold and brilliant figure here. It is asked, where are they to come from? How are God’s people to be brought? What means are to be employed? How is it to be done? The simple answer is this—Did you ever see the dewdrops glistening on the earth? And did you ever ask, “From where did these come? How came they here so infinite in number, so lavishly scattered everywhere, so pure and brilliant?” Nature whispered the answer, “They came from the womb of the morning.” So God’s people will come forth as noiselessly, as mysteriously, as Divinely as if they came “from the womb of the morning,” like the dewdrops. Philosophy has labored to discover the origin of dew and perhaps has guessed it. But to the Eastern, one of the greatest riddles was out of whose womb came the dew? Who is the mother of those pearly drops? Now, so will God’s people come mysteriously. It will be said by the bystander, “There was nothing in that man’s preaching. I thought I would hear an orator! This man has been made the means of salvation to thousands and I thought I would hear an eloquent man! But I have heard a great many preachers far more intelligent and intellectual than he—how were these souls converted?” Why, they have come from the womb of the morning,” mysteriously. Again—the dew drops—who made them? Do kings and princes rise up and hold their scepters and bid the clouds shed tears, or frighten them to weeping by the beating of the drum? Do armies march to the battle to force the sky to give up its treasure and scatter its diamonds lavishly? No. God speaks! He whispers in the ears of Nature and it weeps for joy at the glad news that the morning is coming. God does it—there is no apparent agency employed, no thunder, no lightning—God has done it. That is how God’s people shall be saved! They come forth from the “womb of the morning” Divinely called, Divinely brought, Divinely blessed, Divinely numbered, Divinely scattered over the entire surface of the globe—Divinely refreshing to the world, they proceed from the “womb of the morning.”

You may have noticed in the morning what a multitude of dew drops there are and you may have inquired, “From where comes so great a multitude?” We answer, the womb of Nature is capable of ten thousand births at once. So, “from the womb of the morning” God’s children shall come. No struggle, no pang, no shriek, no agony is heard—all is secret. But they shall come fresh “from the womb of the morning.” The figure is so beautiful that words cannot explain it. You have only to stand early one morning when the sun is beginning to shoot his rays of light up to the sky and look at the fields all glistening with dew, and say, “Where did all these come from?” The answer is, they came “from the womb of the morning.” So when you find that multitudes are saved and you see them coming so mysteriously, so gently, so Divinely and yet so numerously, you can only compare them to the dew of the morning! You say, “Where did they all come from?” And the answer is, they have come “from the womb of the morning.”

II. Now the second part of the text is the sweetest and we must have a little time upon it. There was a promise made to Christ concerning His people and that sets our fears at rest concerning the Church. Now here is ANOTHER PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST—“You have the dew of Your youth.” Ah, Believer, this is the great source of Gospel success—that Christ has the dew of His youth! Jesus Christ, Personally, has the dew of His youth! Certain leaders in their young days have led their troops to battle and by the loudness of their voice and the strength of their bodies, they have inspired their men with courage. But the old warrior has his hair sown with gray. He begins to be decrepit and no longer can lead men to battle. It is not so with Jesus Christ! He has still the dew of His youth. The same Christ who led His troops to battle in His early youth, leads them now. The arm which smote the sinner with His Word, smites now. It is as unpalsied as it was before. The eyes which looked upon His Friends with gladness and upon His foes with a glance, stern and high— those same eyes are regarding us now, undimmed, like that of Moses. He has the dew of His youth! Oh, it delights us to think that Christ was “God over all, blessed forever,” in His youth, filled with Almighty Power— and He is just the same now! He is not an old Christ, a worn-out Christ, but our still Leader! He is as young as ever! The same dew, the same freshness is about Him. You hear it said of a minister, “In his younger days there was a deal of freshness about him, but he is getting old and begins to repeat himself.” It is never so with Christ! He always has the dew of His youth. He who “spoke as never Man spoke” once, when He shall come to speak again, will speak just as He did before! He has the dew of His youth personally.

So also doctrinally, Christ has the dew of His youth. Usually, when a religion starts, it is very rampant, but it afterwards decays. Look at the religion of Mohammed. For 100 years or more it threatened to subvert kingdoms and overturn the whole world. But where are the blades that flashed, then? Where are, now, the willing hands that smote down the foes of Mohammed? Why, his religion has become an old worn-out thing! No one cares about it. And the Turk, sitting on his divan, with his legs crossed, smoking his pipe, is the best image of the Mohammedan religion—old, infirm, effete. But the Christian religion—ah, it is as fresh as when it started from its cradle at Jerusalem! It is as hale, hearty and mighty, as when Paul preached it at Athens, or Peter at Jerusalem. It is not an old religion. Not one particle of it has waxed old, though hundreds of years have passed away. How many religions have died since Christ’s began? How many have risen up, like mushrooms in a night? But is not Christ’s as new as it ever was? I ask you, you old gray-heads, you have known your Master in your youth and you thought His religion sweet and precious—do you find it useless now? Do you find, now, that Christ has not the dew of youth upon Him? No! You can say, “Sweet Jesus, the day I first touched Your hand, the day of my espousal, I thought You altogether lovely. And You are not like an earthly Friend—you have not waxed old. You are as young as ever! Your brow has no furrows on it. Your eyes are not dim. Your hair is still black as the raven, not white with age. You are still unmoved, unaltered, notwithstanding all the years that I have known You.” Well, Beloved, do you see what encouragement this is to us in the propagation of our Master’s Kingdom, that we are not preaching an old thing that is out of date, but a religion which has the dew of its youth upon it? The same religion which could save 3,000 at Pentecost, can save 3,000 now! I preach old Doctrine but it is as new as when it first came from Heaven’s mint! The image and the superscription is as clear and the metal is as bright and undimmed as ever! I have an old sword, but it is not a rusty one—though it has hacked and cut many a twig—yet it has not a single mark of weakness upon itself. It is as new as when it was first forged upon the anvil of Wisdom. The Gospel has the same Spirit attending it, now, that it had when it was a young Gospel. As Peter stood up to preach, then, so may Peters now—and God shall give them the same unction! As Paul preached, then, so shall Pauls now! As Timothy upheld the Lord’s Word, so may Timothys now, and the same Holy Spirit shall attend it!

I am afraid Christ’s people do not believe this sentence—that Christ has the dew of His youth. They have a notion that the times of great revivals are gone by. And the fathers, they ask, where are they? We are apt to cry, “The horses of Israel and the chariots thereof.” No one will ever wear Elijah’s mantle, again, they say. We shall never see great and wondrous deeds again. O foolish unbelief! Christ has still the dew of His youth! He has as much of the Holy Spirit, now, as He had at first, for He has it without measure! And though He has dispensed it unto thousands, He will still dispense it. But the question is asked—How is it that people in these times begin to get tired of the Gospel, if it has the dew of its youth?” Why, Beloved, it is because the Gospel does not come to them in the form of dew at all! Do we not frequently hear a Gospel all dry and without marrow? Like a lot of bones out of which the marrow has been boiled? Very nice these bones are for your philosophical divines who like to study antiquities and discover to what unclean animal this or that bone belongs—but of no service at all to God’s children—for there is no food on the bones! We need a Gospel covered with unction, full of savor. And when God’s people have that, they are never tired of it—they find a dew and a freshness about it which are lasting.

Now, if Christ has the dew of His youth about Him, how earnestly ought those of us who are His ministers to proclaim His Word! There is nothing like strong faith to make a man preach mightily. If I think I preach a tottering old Gospel, I cannot proclaim it with zeal. But if I think I am preaching a strong stalwart Gospel, whose frame has not been shaken and whose might is just as great as ever, how strongly ought I to preach it? Ah, blessed be God, there are a few hearts as hot as ever, a few souls as firm in their Master’s cause as ever were the hearts of the Apostles! There are yet a few good men and true, who rally round the Cross. Like David’s men in the cave, Adullam, there are some mighties who rally round the standard. He is not left without His witnesses—He still has the dew of His youth and the day may come when those now hidden in darkness, shall, as dew before the sunshine, come out, glistening on every bush, adorning every tree, enlightening every village, cheering every pasture, making the little hills sing for joy! Go, Christian, and put this into the form of prayer! Pray to Christ that His people may be willing in the day of His power and that He would always retain the dew of His youth—

*“Ride forth, sweet Prince, triumphantly,*

*And bid the world obey.”*  
Go on and prove Yourself to be the same as ever, the blessed God, “God over all, blessed forevermore.” Up, Christian, up! Fight for your young Monarch! Up with you, warriors! Let your swords flash from their scabbards! Fight for your King! Up! Up! For the old banner is a new banner, too! Christ is still fresh and still young. Let the enthusiasm of your youth gird you! Once again, start up, you aged Christians, and let your young days come again, for if Christ has the dew of His youth about Him, it behooves you to serve Him with youthful vigor! Up! Starting now from your sleep, give to Him a new youth and strive to be as earnest and as zealous for His cause as if it were the first day you ever knew Him. Oh, may God make many sinners willing! May He bring many to His feet, for He has promised that they shall be willing in the day of His power!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2849 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REMEMBERING GOD’S WORKS  
NO. 2849

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 4, 1877.

**“He has made His wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. He has given meat unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His Covenant.”  
Psalm 111:4, 5.**

GOD’S works are, of course, wonderful because they are His works, but they are not “a nine days’ wonder.” They are not intended to be admired for a little while and then to be forgotten. The Psalmist says, “He has made His wonderful works to be remembered.” I fear that we too often fail to keep in our memory the recollection of God’s exceeding goodness and that we allow the works of the Lord, as well as His mercies, to lie “forgotten in unthankfulness.” If it has been so in the past with any of us, let us, at the outset of our meditation, begin to chide ourselves for our forgetfulness and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen our memories that we may remember the wonderful works of the Lord more than we have done.

Our subject is twofold. First, it is God’s design that His wonderful works should be remembered. And, secondly, it is our wisdom constantly to have those wonderful works in remembrance.

I. First then, I learn from our text that IT IS GOD’S DESIGN THAT HIS WONDERFUL WORKS SHOULD BE REMEMBERED.  
He has ensured the carrying out of this design, for, first, the very greatness of His works prevents them from being forgotten. When God has come forth out of His secret places to work Redemption for His people with a high hand and an outstretched arm, He has worked such mighty marvels that all history has been made to ring with the tidings of them. Is it possible that Israel could ever forget what the Lord did in Egypt when He smote the hosts of their oppressors and brought forth His people with a great deliverance? Could they ever forget the wondrous scene at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and all his army sank like lead in the surging waters that had stood upright, like massive walls, to make a way for the ransomed hosts to escape? There were other events, in the conquest of Canaan and in the life of David which must have been, through their extraordinary character, forever burned into the recollection of God’s ancient people and, truly, you and I can say of many of God’s works on our behalf, that they have been so great that it would be quite impossible for us to forget them! Do you remember your conversion, beloved Friend? Perhaps you were a great and open sinner and the change in you was so remarkable that you can easily remember the time when it occurred—and it would not be possible for Satan himself to make you doubt that such a change did happen to you! You remember, my Brother, when the load of your guilt was removed from your burdened heart? I can imagine that I could forget my own name and that I could forget my own sons, but I think I never could, under any circumstances, forget the day when I began to sing to my dear Lord and Savior— *“I will praise You every day  
Now Your anger’s turned away.”*  
It was such a marvelous thing—so amazing a thing in itself—so altogether extraordinary that it could never, never, never be forgotten! “He has made His wonderful works to be remembered” because they are so wonderful. Study deeply what Sovereign Grace has done to you, that you may see the greatness of the mercy and admire it, for, very much in proportion as you appraise the mercy of God at its proper value, will you be sure to have it fixed upon your memory all your life.  
God made His wonderful works to be remembered, in the next place, because of the persons upon whom those works were worked. There is many a man who would soon forget all he hears about the favor of God because he is not conscious of his own need of it, but when a person is, spiritually, in an exceedingly anxious state of mind and heart, and God’s great mercy comes to him, he is sure to remember it. You remember that the Israelites were in Egypt as a nation of slaves, so that when God fetched them out, the serfs of the brick-kiln, the men who were driven to their daily tasks by the oppressors’ whips, the poor slaves who were denied even the straw with which to make the bricks—well, when they were Divinely delivered, at the very time when Pharaoh’s tyranny had become utterly unbearable, they could not possibly forget how they had been delivered! That day of their emancipation became the beginning of months to them and they numbered their years from it, for, to poor oppressed Israel, it was like life from the dead!  
At the present time, in a spiritual sense, God, in His mercy, interposes on behalf of those who are in a similar condition to that of Israel in Egypt. You remember how Hannah sang, “He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory”? That dunghill would help the beggar’s memory. He would say, “How can I forget that I was thrown away like a worthless thing? In my own estimation, I was a rotten, worthless, useless thing, fit only to be thrown among the rubbish of creation. But the Lord suddenly appeared to me, lifted me up and set me among the princes of His people! Can I ever forget that? Let the bride forget her ornaments and let my right hand forget her cunning, but never can my soul forget how the Lord brought me up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”  
Some of us were mere wrecks of humanity—yawning chasms gaped beneath us and we thought that we would be speedily swallowed up. But we cried unto the Lord in our trouble and He brought us unto a quiet haven. Can we ever forget His wonderful works? We were sorely sick. Our soul abhorred all manner of food and we drew near to the gates of the grave—but the Good Physician came and restored us from all our sicknesses just when death stared us in the face. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I feel certain that I can appeal to many of you and say that you were in such a plight as this when the Lord revealed Himself to you. Such was your distress and the abject condition in which you were, that, for you to forget what the Lord did for you would be such base ingratitude that I cannot believe that it is possible! Surely you feel that you must remember Him, and that sooner might a woman forget her sucking child than that you should forget the wonderful works which the Lord your God has worked for you!

Besides this, the Lord took care that His wonderful works would be remembered by putting them on record in the Scriptures. The five Books of Moses—the Pentateuch—are the Divinely-Inspired record of the wonderful works which God did for His people in the very early times of the world’s history. The pen of Inspiration was carefully employed in order that what God had done might be written down for all future generations to read. This blessed Book has made the wonderful works of God to be remembered for all time—it was written for that very purpose! It tells the unique story of the eternal love of God to us. It also tells us the wonderful story of Love Incarnate in the Christ of Bethlehem and further tells us how He died, how He rose again and how He lives in Heaven to plead for us as our great Intercessor before the Throne of God! Let us bless Him more and more for these sacred pages in which He makes His wonderful works to be remembered! And I venture to suggest to you, Beloved, that it is well when God performs any work of mercy for you, that you should cause it to be remembered in a similar way.  
Much of God’s praise is never made known on this earth for lack of a ready pen to record the gracious experiences of His people. The keeping of a diary is very apt to lead to a stilted form of piety. If a man feels that he must put something down every day, he is very liable to put down that which is not true. He may think it is true even when it is really false. But the recording of the many special mercies that we receive from God appears to me to be a duty which we owe to our age and also to our successors. If some of the wonderful deliverances which are recorded in the biographies of the saints had not been jotted down at the time, we would have been great losers. And if we have anything worth recording and I think we have, even if we do not care to write it down to be seen by the public eye, yet, at least, let us record it for the sake of the little circle in which we live and move, that, perhaps, some of our descendants, or some of our friends may gather comfort from our personal experience of God’s mercy. “He has made His wonderful works to be remembered.” Let us act in harmony with this grand design and preserve the memory of the Lord’s great goodness to us!  
Moreover, in order to preserve the memory of His wonderful works, God was pleased to command His people to teach their children to remember what He had done for them. In addition to the Inspired records, He told them to make their children’s memories into books of remembrance. Jewish fathers were commanded to call their children together and tell them how the Lord brought them out of Egypt, how He led them through the wilderness and how He gave them the land of Canaan to be their own possession. They were to teach their children and their children’s children, the wonderful story of the Lord’s dealings with them. And we ought to be concerned to hand down, from father to son, the memory of God’s great goodness to us. Tell your own children if you cannot tell anyone else, what God has done for their father. Sitting around the fire in the evening, your children might often be not merely interested, but instructed and impressed by the narrative of God’s Providential dealings with you. Possibly the story might not read well in print, but never mind that, for there will be an interest about it to your own household! So, be sure that you tell it. My memory recalls, at this very moment, many a pleasing incident from what my grandfather told me concerning his early struggles in the ministry and the Providential interpositions of God on his behalf. Perhaps he might as well have written them down, but he did not. I think that, possibly, he knew that he had a living book within his grandchild’s brain and that the boy might, in later days, tell to others what his grandfather had told him. At any rate, I do earnestly exhort all Christians to make God’s wonderful works to be remembered wherever they can, and do it especially by telling your children what you have experienced of His goodness. Do not die, O you gray heads, you who have passed your threescore years and ten—do not pass away from this earth with all those pleasant memories of God’s loving kindness to be buried with you in your coffin—but let your children and your children’s children know what the everlasting God did for you!  
Once more, in order to make His wonderful works to be remembered, the Lord was pleased to institute certain ordinances to keep them in the minds of His people. To preserve the memory of the deliverance out of Egypt, there was the significant rite of the Passover. On that night when God brought His people out of the house of bondage, it was the blood of the paschal lamb that protected each house that was sprinkled with it. And so Israel ever afterwards kept the Passover in memory of that night when God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” And you know how our blessed Redeemer has given us the institution of the Lord’s Supper, saying, “This do in remembrance of Me,” that the Atonement, that great master-fact of the Christian religion might always be fresh upon our memories and Christ be set forth visibly crucified among us as though it were but yesterday! If anything may be forgotten, it must not be Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Calvary!  
Beloved, take care that you attend carefully to that sacred memorial. If I am addressing any true Believers in Christ, who, nevertheless, have been disobedient to their Lord’s command, “This do in remembrance of Me,” I would solemnly ask them to be disobedient no longer! I am sure, Beloved, you miss a great privilege and I am equally sure that you are omitting a very sacred duty by not obeying your Lord’s command. If it is right for you, as a Believer in Christ, to stay away from your Master’s Table, it is also right for me, and right for all God’s servants. If we all did so, there would be no celebration of the Lord’s Supper anywhere! And, so, that which our Savior, in His Divine Wisdom, instituted for a memorial, would cease to be. Perhaps you say that you are not a church member. If so, I reply that if you are a Christian, you ought to be a member of Christ’s visible Church on earth, for, if you have a right not to be a member, I have a right not to be one and so have all the people of God. And, so, the Church of God, as an organization in the world, would cease to exist! Who is to maintain the ministry of the Word? Who is to keep up the ordinances of God’s House if all His people break up into separate grains of sand instead of being living stones built up into His spiritual Temple? “He has made His wonderful works to be remembered.” So, join with Him in that sacred purpose and, in observing the ordinances instituted by your Lord, set forth in your Baptism, your death, burial and resurrection with Him and, in the memorial Supper, show forth His death until He come.  
Thus I have shown you how God has made His wonderful works to be remembered and I press it upon the heart and conscience of all the Lord’s people to see that their memory is happily burdened with the recollection of God’s mercy. Study diligently, in the Biblical record, what He did in the olden times. Learn, from Church History, what He has done from the days of Christ’s sojourn upon the earth until now. But especially recollect what He has done for you and often say, “Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul.” Abundantly utter the memory of God’s great goodness! The Lord’s children should not be dumb! Worldlings are noisy enough in praising their false gods—they often make night hideous and startle us from our sleep as they sing the songs of Bacchus, or Mars, or other heathen deities.  
Then shall the children of God be silent and allow His mercies to lie forgotten in unthankfulness? No, no! But write the record of them upon your doors! Let it be seen upon the walls of your houses! Publish the glad news wherever you go! Tell it even to unwilling ears and say, again and again, “The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever. I can speak with confidence upon this matter, for in my experience I have proved it to be so.” Facts like these are among the best arguments to silence infidel doubts and Satanic temptations. Tell the skeptics what God has done for you and ask them whether unbelief can work such wonders for them. You, poor widow, with your seven little children, tell them how you took your troubles to the Lord and He helped you, so that you know that there is a God, for you rested and your family rested upon Him in your great sorrow—and He upheld and delivered you. Tell them, you who have been sick, and in poverty, and who cried unto God and He helped you—tell them that you know that there is a God that hears prayer! Tell them, you who are rejoicing in God with unspeakable joy and who often feel so happy that you scarcely can bear the great delight—tell them that God still lifts up the light of His Countenance upon His people! And if they sneer at you, tell them that you are as honest as they are and that they have as much reason to believe your word as you have to believe theirs. Pit your experience against their arguments! Lay your facts over against their fallacies and, in this way, you shall become valiant soldiers for the Truth as it is in Jesus.  
II. Now, secondly, IT IS WISDOM ON OUR PART TO REMEMBER THESE WONDERFUL WORKS OF THE LORD, for the effect upon our minds will be useful in many ways.  
First, it will assure us of the Lord’s mercy and compassion. Read the next sentence of the text, “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.” Gracious, that is, to the sinful! Full of compassion, that is, to the weak and to the sorrowful! If we keep in remembrance the wonderful works of God, our experience will prove the Truth of the text. How gracious the Lord was to sinful Israel! When they rebelled against Him and murmured at Him, He still worked great wonders for them. He fed them with manna from Heaven and brought them flesh to eat and guided them by His fierycloudy pillar. He would not let their sin turn away His Grace, but He still loved them. Does not your life, Beloved, prove to you that God is very gracious to you, forgiving your sin, overlooking your infirmities and bearing long with you? I want you to notice that it has been so in your own life because, then, when you meet with a poor trembling sinner, you can say to him, or to her, “I know that God is very gracious, for He has been gracious to me.” You can tell the man with a troubled conscience that Christ can ease it for He has eased yours. You can tell how your great sin was taken away by Christ’s great Atonement and you can comfort those who are burdened and bowed down, by saying, “He did all this for me and though, to my shame, I have to confess that I have often grieved Him, He has never left me, nor forsaken me. Even when I have lost the Light of His Countenance, through my own fault, yet, when I have mourned over my guilt, He has beamed upon me again. In great mercy has He dealt with me and He has been wonderfully gracious to me.” Such testimony as that will be a great encouragement to others. As they hear what the Lord has done for you, they will be led by the Spirit of God to turn to Him that the like favor may be displayed towards them.

Recollect, also, the great compassion of the Lord. I hope your own life has shown you how very tender He is towards those who trust Him, even as the Psalmist says, “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” I can recollect how, in a time of terrible depression of spirit and of intense anguish of pain, I cast myself upon my God with that text in my mouth. I said to Him, “O Lord, I am Your child and if any child of mine were pained as I am, and I could take away his pain, I would do so. You are my Father. Prove your fatherliness by easing me, or else by strengthening my frail spirit to endure all this agony.” I can even now recall the wonderful relief that came over both body and mind when I had pleaded like that before God and I, therefore, speak with confidence of His fullness of compassion, for I have tried it and proved it for myself! And I invite all who are bowed down to do as I did.  
Some of you may be in great distress of mind, a distress out of which no fellow creature can deliver you, you poor nervous people at whom others often laugh. I can assure you that God will not laugh at you! He knows all about that sad complaint of yours, so I urge you to go to Him, for the experience of many of us has taught us that “the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.” As a mother comforts her children so will He comfort you. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax—so go to Him in all the weakness of your deep contrition and you shall find a mother’s heart in the bosom of Jesus—something more tender than a man’s heart could ever be! Flee to your God this very hour! Our own experience leads us to urge you to do so, does it not, Brothers and Sisters in Christ? If this were the time and place, and we could turn this service into an experience meeting, would not many of you rise and say, “It is even so,” as you remembered God’s wonderful works to you? Would you not say, “Yes, truly He is the God of Grace, gracious and full of compassion”?  
The next effect that this remembrance will have on our mind is this. It will make us consider and acknowledge the Divine bounty to us throughout all our lives. Observe what the Psalmist says next—“He has given meat unto them that fear Him.” Now, as we remember that—as the Israelites might have recollected how they had abundance of food even in the wilderness—we shall be led to think of what poor creatures we must be to be so dependent upon our God. We would not have been alive if He had not fed us. How poor we all are in our natural condition! I heard one say of another, who had grown to be a rich man, and it was said in a wicked, envious spirit, “I recollect the time when he had not two shirts to his back and I said to him, ‘And your mother remembers the time when you had not one.’” There is not much for the richest man to boast of— men glory in their possessions, and they talk of others who are poor, as though they were to be despised. There is not a man alive who has not had to be indebted to God for the breath in his nostrils! We owe everything to Him and, in looking back upon our spiritual career, we have to say, “He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”  
We have had to receive from the Lord the daily food that our souls have required. In temporal things and in spiritual, we have been pensioners at His gate, beggars wholly dependent upon His bounty. We have not been able to provide for ourselves one morsel of the bread of Heaven! The Lord has had to give us all that we have had all through our whole life, both physically and spiritually. He has not only given meat to His people once or twice, but all their lives! The bread you eat to nourish your body and the spiritual food whereon your soul has been fed have been continually given to you. Have you ever counted how many meals you have eaten from the first day until now? Have you ever thought of the great store of spiritual food that you have received from the Lord? The queen of Sheba was astonished at the provision that Solomon made for his household for a single day, but oh, what wonderful provision Christ has made for you! He has given you, spiritually, His flesh to eat and His blood to drink! He has given you, even in superabundance, the riches of His Grace and He will, in due time, give you the riches of His Glory! Do not fail to recollect His wonderful works, in order that, while you realize your absolute dependence upon Him, you may also see how He has continually supplied all your needs so that you have lacked nothing from the first day even until now! He has prepared a table before you in the presence of your enemies and He has made you to lie down in green pastures and led you beside the still waters.

Recollect, too, the circumstances under which some of you have been fed. It was a great wonder when God furnished a table in the wilderness and it has been a wonder, to some of you, where your daily bread has come from, has it not? I can look back upon the past history of some of you and note how trying your circumstances have been. Yet all your real needs have been supplied. You often woke up in the morning feeling very much like the little birds that do not know where their breakfast is to be found. But I hope that you, like the little birds, began to sing even before you found your breakfast, for you did find it! I love, in the winter, to see the robins sit on the bare tree limbs and yet sing. It is easy enough to sing in springtime when all the birds are singing—but it is not so easy to sit on the bare limbs and still praise the Lord. Still, you should do even that, for you have been fed up till now, have you not? You know that ancient promise, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure”? And that promise has been fulfilled in your experience. Sometimes, perhaps, you have attended a ministry where your soul has been well-nigh starved and you have not known where to look for the spiritual meat that you needed to make you grow. Yet, you are still alive, for the Lord Jesus has, Himself, fed you. “Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” has your soul been nourished! So, bless Him and praise His holy name, this very hour, and let not the memory of His great goodness ever be forgotten by you.

Then remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, the variety of supplies that you have had. “He has given meat to them that fear Him.” All sorts of spiritual meat has He given you. When you were a child, you fed upon the simple doctrines of the Word. But since then, your Lord has given you strong meat that you may become a man in Christ Jesus. In all conditions, you have had food convenient for you. At some stages of your spiritual history, it was not every ministry that could meet your needs. You could not listen with profit to this man or that, but the Lord Himself fed you with His Word—and many a choice morsel you had while you were reading your morning chapter—and it seemed as if every verse in that chapter had been written specially for you, or as if the ink were still wet upon the page and that the love-letter came to you fresh from your dear Father’s hand! Thus has He, many a time, given meat to you who fear Him.

Blessed be His holy name, not one good thing has failed of all that He has promised! Have you ever lacked anything? Has your Lord been a wilderness unto you, a land of barrenness? No, you have dwelt in a land flowing with milk and honey and you have been fed to the fullest! Do not forget this but tell the story of it to others. Tell it to your poorer neighbors. Tell it to poor saints when they are in low water. Tell it to the poor distressed children of God who cannot feed upon the Word. Tell them that their Heavenly Father will never let them die of starvation, for God, who feeds the ravens and the sparrows, will surely not allow His own children to starve!

There is another thing to be learned from the memory of God’s goodness. It is intended to certify us of His faithfulness. “He will ever be mindful of His Covenant,” is the last clause of our text. The Lord never forgot the Covenant He made with Abraham. Often, when He might, otherwise, have destroyed Israel, He remembered that Covenant and He turned aside His wrath. And do you think He will ever forget the Covenant which He has made with His only-begotten Son, a Covenant signed, sealed and ratified, “in all things ordered well,” a Covenant confirmed by the Sacrifice of His well-beloved Son, a Covenant which He signed with His own blood and which is to stand fast forever and ever? No, He cannot be false to His oath! He cannot lie! He must perform what He has promised. “Has He said, and shall He not do it?” All the past history of our lives goes to show that God is faithful and will be faithful even to the end. I have never met with a child of God whose experience did not go to confirm the fidelity of God. “You are My witnesses,” said the Lord. And if He were to call me into the witness-box and, I may say that if He were to call many of you, your witness would be very straightforward, very plain, very clear, very definite. You would say, “He keeps His Covenant forever and ever.” He is not forgetful of the pledge which He gave to David, and to David’s Lord, therefore, go forward with unwavering confidence in Him. Doubt not, nor be discouraged, but rejoice in Him and trust Him evermore!

The last thing that this memory of God’s wonderful works ought to do for us is to make us praise Him. This Psalm begins with, “Praise you the Lord,” and it finishes up with, “His praise endures forever.” Well, Beloved, the memory of His great goodness is intended to make us praise Him forever and ever, so let us begin to do it at once! Do not go out of this place sorrowful—let your recollection of God’s goodness move you to praise Him. If you have no present cause for joy, so far as you can see, think of the past mercies that you have received. If everything looks gloomy ahead, recollect how the Lord has helped you in all the steps you have already trod. Give Him a grateful song this very hour. Smooth those wrinkles from your brow. Let your eyelids no longer hang down with heaviness, but say in your soul, “The Lord has dealt well with His servants, according to His Word. Therefore will we praise Him with our whole heart in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.” I frequently exhort you to praise the Lord because I feel how necessary it is and because we shall soon be in Heaven—therefore, it is well to be holding frequent rehearsals here of that which is to be our everlasting song!

Now I turn to the unconverted and say, Dear Friends, from our own experience we can tell you that to serve God is a blessed thing. He is a grand Master—there is none like He. He makes His servants blessed forever. He never leaves them, nor forsakes them. Therefore, come and put your trust in Him. Hide yourself under the shadow of His wings and then, you, too, shall be able to say, even as we do, “He is faithful. His mercy endures forever.” God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 111.**

Verse 1. Praise you the LORD. Or, “Hallelujah,” “Praise be unto Jehovah.” “Praise you the Lord.” I invite all Christians to give good heed to this injunction, whether others praise Him, or not, “Praise you the Lord.” Do it now! Do it always, do it heartily, do it instead of what you sometimes do, namely, doubt Him, murmur at Him, rebel against Him. “Praise you the Lord.” You who are beginning the Christian life, praise Him for your regeneration. You who have long continued in it, praise Him for sustaining you. You who are the most ripe for Heaven, begin now the praises that will never, never end!

1. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. It is always well when a preacher practices what he preaches. David does that here—“Praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord.” One of the best ways of enforcing an exhortation is to practically obey it. “Praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord.” But when a man becomes an example to others, he should be very careful to set a good example. Hence, the Psalmist not only says that he will praise the Lord, but that he will do it heartily, yes, with his whole heart. Such a God as Jehovah is, is worthy of all the praise we can give Him. We ought to praise Him with all our thought, with all our skill, with all our love, with all our zeal, with all our heart. David tells us that he would render this praise both among the choice and select company of God’s people, “in the assembly of the upright,” and also in the larger congregation, where a more mixed multitude would be found. Brothers and Sisters, praise is never out of place and never out of season. If you are with a little company of two or three choice Christian Friends, praise the Lord in their midst. Tell them your experience and bless the name of the Lord for His Grace and mercy. But if you should be in a larger assembly, where the characters of some may be doubtful, be not abashed, but still continue to praise the Lord.

2. The works of the LORD are great. They are great in number, in size, in purpose, and in effect. Even when God makes a little thing, it is great because of the wisdom displayed in making it. The microscope has taught us the greatness of God in creating tiny creatures of wondrous beauty, yet so small as not to be perceptible to the naked eye. “The works of the Lord are great,”

2. Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. If we take pleasure in a man, we also take pleasure in his works—we like to see what he has made and, in like manner, the saints of God take pleasure in His works. They revel in the beauties of creation. They delight to study His wisdom in Providence, but, best of all, they are most charmed with the wonders of Divine Grace. These works are so marvelous that a mere surface glance at them is not sufficient—you need to search them out, to dig deep in the mines of God’s Wisdom as seen in His works, to try to find out the secret motive of His everlasting purposes and, the more you study them, the more they will grow! Some things impress you at first with greater significance than they do afterwards, but the works of God are so great that if you look at them throughout your whole lifetime, they will continue to grow still greater.

3. His work. I suppose the Psalmist means God’s chief work, His grand work of Grace. “His work.”  
3. Is honorable and glorious: and His righteousness endures forever. The work of God is full of Grace and it is full of honor and glory to His blessed name. And every single portion of the work of Grace is full of that which resounds to the honor and glory of the Triune Jehovah. I hope, dear Friends, that you delight to study the whole plan of saving mercy, from its initiation in the eternal purpose to its culmination in the gathering together of all the people of God. If you do, you will see that all through, it “is honorable and glorious: and His righteousness endures forever.” As it endured Calvary, it may well endure forever! Though the Lord Jesus Christ purposed so to save His people, He would not do it by sacrificing His righteousness. He fulfilled righteousness to the utmost by His perfect life and by His suffering even unto death and now we are quite sure that no further strain will ever be put upon that Divine Attribute. “His righteousness endures forever.”  
4. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered. Do not be forgetful of God’s wonderful works! They are made on purpose to be remembered, so treasure them up, for they are worthy of being held in everlasting remembrance.  
4. The LORD is gracious and full of compassion. This is what His people always find to be true whenever they read the history of His works. The thought that strikes them is, “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.” If any of you long to be at peace with God, however far you may have wandered from Him, He is ready to receive you if you will but return to Him, for He “is gracious and full of compassion”—not merely tender-hearted, but full of graciousness. He abounds with thoughts of love towards His people! Come and try Him for yourselves.  
5. He has given meat unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His Covenant. The needs of all His people are always supplied by Him. He finds food, both for body and soul, and you may rest assured that every promise of His Covenant will be faithfully kept. You may forget it, but He will not. “He will ever be mindful of His Covenant” and mindful of you because of that Covenant—mindful of your heavy cares, mindful of your bitter griefs, mindful of your weakness and infirmity because you are in His Covenant and He is mindful of it!  
6. He has showed His people the power of His works. He showed the Israelites what He could do, what force He could throw into what He did and He has shown to us Christians the same thing in another way, by the power of His gracious Spirit, blessing the preaching of His Word to the conversion of sinners and maintaining the great fight against the dread powers of darkness. “He has showed His people the power of His works.”  
6. That He may give them the heritage of the heathen. He gave to Israel the land of Canaan where the heathen dwelt. And He will give to Christ, when He asks for them, the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession! Let us pray God to prove the power of His works in the subduing of the nations unto Christ.  
7. The works of His hands are verity and judgment. He never acts contrary to Truth and righteousness. Even when He puts on His most terrible look and smites His enemies in His wrath, still, “the works of His hands are verity and judgment.”

7, 8. All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in Truth and uprightness. Whatever God commands, determines, purposes—you may rest assured that it will be accomplished. But His purposes are always accomplished, not by caprice, but by “Truth and uprightness.” God is a Sovereign, doing as He wills, but He never wills to do anything that is inconsistent with justice, truth, and uprightness.

9. He sent redemption unto His people. He brought them up out of Egypt with a high hand and a stretched out arm. And He has sent redemption to us, first, by price, when He redeemed us from our guilt upon the tree. And then by power, when the Holy Spirit came and broke our bands asunder and set us free from the dominion of our sins!

9. He has commanded His Covenant forever: holy and reverend is His name. His whole Character commands our reverence because it is superlatively holy and His name is to us a word of awe never to be mentioned flippantly and never to be quoted without earnest thought and prostration of heart before Him. I fear that there are some professors who use the name of God far too freely—they do not recollect that “holy and reverend is His name.” I can hardly think that any man can be “reverend.” There are some who choose to be called by that title—I suppose they mean something less than the word means here. “Holy and reverend is His name,” not mine, certainly.

10. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. It is the A B C of true wisdom. He who has learned to fear God has learned the first part of wisdom. According to some, the word, “beginning,” here means the chief, the head, the front, just as, often in Scripture, “beginning,” signifies that. “The fear of the Lord” is the chief part of “wisdom,” the essence of it.

10. A good understanding have all they that do His commandments. Practical goodness is the proof of a good understanding. A man may have an orthodox head and yet not have a good understanding. A man may be able to talk very glibly about the commandments of God and even to preach about them with considerable power—but it is the doing of them that is the main point.

10. His praise endures forever.  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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COVENANT BLESSINGS  
NO. 2681

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 1, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1858.

**“He has given meat unto them that fear Him:  
He will always be mindful of His Covenant.”  
Psalm 111:5.**

THIS verse occurs in one of the Hallelujah Psalms, that is, those commencing with “Praise you the Lord.” We often find the Psalmist praising and extolling God—let us imitate his example. Let us do so because we shall find it very pleasant and profitable and because, also, it is our bounden duty. One of the highest exercises of the new life is praising God! Our doubts and fears are indications of life, for the dead man neither doubts nor fears. But our songs of praise are far higher demonstrations of the life within and are more worthy fruits of a soil which has been the subject of God’s husbandry, which has been plowed by the agonies of the Savior and made fertile through His precious blood. My Brothers and Sisters, our life should be one continuous Psalm with here and there a note descending very deep! Yet we should always seek to sing as we live. The stars sing as they shine and they sing by shining. Let us sing while we live and live by singing—and let our life be perpetually singing one great Psalm!

There are many ways of praising God. We should do it with the lips and grateful is the voice of song in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. We should do it by our daily conversation—let our acts be acts of praise, as well as our words be words of praise. We should do it even by the very look of our eyes and by the appearance of our countenance. Let not your face be sad, let your countenance be joyous! Sing wherever you go, yes, when you are laden with trouble, let no man see it. “You, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face.” Be you always glad, for it is God’s commandment, through His servant, the Apostle Paul, “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice.” And yet once more he says, “Rejoice evermore.” That we may have themes for song, David has in this Psalm mentioned many subjects. Let us attend to the subjects of the text—the subject, I might have said, for it is all one. This verse is the voice of experience. It is not the voice of hope, saying, “He will give,” but the voice of experience—“He has given meat unto them that fear Him” and the voice of faith—“He will ever be mindful of His Covenant.”

We shall notice, first of all, the gift—“He has given meat unto them that fear Him.” Then we shall notice the Covenant—“He will ever be mindful of His Covenant.” And then, lastly, the character of the persons here spoken of—“He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”

I. Let us first consider THE GIFT. “He has given meat.” We are to understand this expression, of course, in a twofold sense, of our necessities. The first, temporal. The other, spiritual.

First, we are to understand this expression in a temporal sense. Our bodies need meat. We cannot keep this mortal fabric in repair without continually providing it with food. God’s children are not, by the fact of their being spiritual men, prevented from feeling natural needs—they hunger and they thirst even as others do. Sometimes, too, they are even called to suffer poverty and know not where their next morsel of meat shall come from. Blessed be God—

*“He that has made our Heaven secure*

*Will here all good provide”—*  
and God’s Covenant relates not merely to the great and marvelous things that we need spiritually, but it is a Covenant which includes in the catalog of its gifts, mercies that are food for the body, mercies for our immediate and pressing needs—“He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”

God has never suffered His people to starve. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” The promise is as true under the New Covenant as under the Old, that our bread shall be given us and our water shall be sure. The Lord, who feeds the ravens, will not be less careful of His people. He who supplies every insect with its food and feeds the prowling lion in his majesty, will not suffer His own home-born children, those who are nearest His heart, to perish for lack of nutriment. “The cattle on a thousand hills are His,” so He will not allow His children to lack for their meat. He it is to whom the earth belongs and the fullness thereof—He will not, then, suffer His children to go without necessary supplies. “He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”

Some of us are qualified to speak from experience upon this point. We may truly say that God has always given us our meat. Indeed, we have not lacked anything. Up to now the road has been to us like that of the Israelites when they came to the camp of the Syrians and found the way strewn with gold, silver and garments! God has provided for our needs even before they have come. He has anticipated our necessities. But there are others of you who have been brought so low by poverty and affliction that you are qualified to speak in a still more emphatic fashion. You have sometimes gone, with a hungry stomach, to an empty cupboard. You have wondered where your supplies would come from. You may even have been houseless and homeless. But ah, children of the living God, has He utterly failed you? Though He has reduced you very low, so that the last morsel was eaten from the cupboard, has He not ultimately supplied your needs and that, too, by means not miraculous, but almost so? Has He not in Providence sent you things which you needed and which you scarcely expected to receive? In answer to prayer, has He not delivered you out of your deepest tribulations? And when you were well-nigh famished, has He not spread your table with plenty when you have bent your knees before Him? Yes, you tried ones, you have tested this text and have proved it true! You sons of poverty and toil, you have had to rest the whole weight of your daily maintenance on the promise of God without anything to look to but that—and have you ever found Him fail you? No, you will unanimously bear witness that this is a great Truth of God, “He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”

But it is surprising, sometimes, how God has done it! I have heard many a story from the poor among my own flock of how God has delivered them—strange stories, at which some of you would laugh if I were to repeat them. There are some of them who could write, “Banks of Faith” that would be as wonderful as that of William Huntington! Some of you laugh at that book and do not believe it, but it is only because there are so many things of the same sort all put together that they seem to be incredible through their number. But there are many of the Lord’s servants who could easily compose a “Bank of Faith” like Huntington’s, for they have had their most deep necessities and their most poignant sorrows— and they have had their relief well-nigh miraculous—so that, if God had thrust His hand out of the clouds and handed down bread and clothing for them, their deliverance would not have been more apparently from His hand than it has been in the way whereby His Providence has supplied their needs! They can say that He has done it and He has done it marvelously and constantly, too. “He has given meat unto them that fear Him.”

Why, if the child of God were in such a position that the earth could not yield him bread, God would open the windows of Heaven and rain manna from there again! If a Christian could be placed in such a position that the common course of Providence could not serve his end, God would change the nature of everything, rather than break His promise! He would reverse all the seasons and unloose the very bonds of Creation, itself, and let the laws of Nature run riot, rather than suffer one of His promises to fail, or one of His children to lack. “He has given meat”—and He will always do so—“unto them that fear Him.”

But we are to understand this expression chiefly in a spiritual sense. God’s people need spiritual meat. I was talking, the other day, to a minister who certainly is not noted for his great soundness in the faith. He was making a joke to me about certain people in his congregation who said they could not feed under him. “There is Mrs. So-and-So,” he said, “who tells me that she cannot get a bit of food out of my ministry. I do not know how it is,” he continued laughingly, “for I do not think you say half as many good things as I do! But yet the old woman cannot feed upon my sermons.” He laughed at the idea of feeding under a ministry, but there is a good deal more in the expression than many think. There is much meant by it that cannot be expressed by any other word. It is only the true Christian who can understand its meaning. He hears a very eloquent discourse delivered, “but,” he says, “I have got no food out of it.” Or he hears a very learned discourse, “but,” he says, “I cannot feed under that.” There is a peculiar style of preaching and a peculiar style of hearing which can only be described as a “feeding preaching” and a “feeding hearing,” in which the child of God feels that, though he may have learned little that is fresh, yet still his soul has been receiving spiritual food and he can go on his way rejoicing.

And, my Brothers, the House of God is one of the principal places where He feeds His people. And those to whom He has committed the solemn work of the ministry should be very careful that there is something in what they say that the child of God can feed on. The child of God can never feed under a ministry unless he hears the doctrines of Grace and listens to the things of the Kingdom of God.

“Our minister preached a fine metaphysical sermon the other day,” one says. “I never heard such a clear distinction as he made between that point and the other.” But the child of God goes out and says, “Well, I don’t need any of his metaphysics—there was no food in the sermon for my soul. I went there to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ. I went to be taught something for my soul’s welfare, something about the Heaven that is to come, or the Hell that is to be shunned. I wanted to hear something about communion with Christ, something about the Eternal Covenant. But there was nothing of the kind in the whole discourse.” Sermons need to be instructive! There should be real teaching in them concerning the things of the Kingdom of God. “Why,” said a good writer, once, “if you were to hear six lectures by a geologist, he would be the poorest geologist in the world if he did not give you some clear ideas concerning geology. But you may hear 60 sermons from many preachers without getting any notion of their system of divinity.”

It is the glory of the men of this age that they have no system of divinity—they have cast creeds to the wind—they have no forms in which they can systematically state the Truths of God which they believe. The reason is because they have nothing to state! No man will avoid having a system when he has certain definite principles. It is impossible for a man to believe the Truths in God’s Word without insensibly to himself forming a creed of some sort or other. It is the fashion to talk about giving up creeds, but creeds are only the orderly way of stating God’s Truth. If we hold the Truths, themselves, we shall always be able to set them out in some fashion and to communicate our knowledge to others so that, in a given number of discourses, our hearers will be pretty tolerably acquainted with our ideas of the Truth of God. “He has given meat unto them that fear Him” under the ministry. Sometimes God gives your minister such a gift of utterance that if he were to preach for a week, you would listen to him. There are periods when your own minister gives no food to you, though he does to others, because he has to care for different members of God’s family. But there are other periods when the Lord seems to have given him such bountiful gifts that he has let fall handfuls to be gathered by the gleaners as did the man, Boaz, and you pick them up and feast on them and are satisfied.

There is another way in which God gives food to His children—that is, in the Bible. This precious volume is the greatest granary of spiritual food for God’s people. Would to God you read it more! With your magazines, newspapers and tracts on this, that and the other subject, you have too much covered up this ancient Bible, this grand old Book, this emporium of all wisdom, this sum of all knowledge! Yes, Christian, if you need spiritual meat, study a chapter of God’s Word. If you need to have food for your souls, give up, for a little while, reading the works of even the best of men, and take a Psalm for the theme of your study—or if not a whole Psalm, take one verse of it! Take it for your daily meditation— chew on it and digest it all day long—and so you will find meat for “them that fear Him.”

Let me just say a word or two of caution to you on this point. When you read the Bible, do not think that you will get spiritual food out of it simply by reading. I know some people who make a point of reading two chapters of the Bible every day. They do so as a sort of mental exercise— they simply run their eyes down the page and, after all, do not know a word they have been reading. That is not the way to feed upon God’s Word! We cannot truly feed unless we understand and believe what we read. In reading the Scripture, do as Luther advised. He says, “When I get a promise, I treat it as if it were a tree in my garden. I know there is rich fruit on it and if I cannot at once get it, I shake the tree backwards and forwards by prayer and meditation until, at last, the fruit drops into my hand.” Do you the same! Read a short portion of Scripture—turn it over and over, again, in your meditation all day long—and then, if you cannot get anything out of it, I will tell you a way whereby you will be sure to get something. Go down on your knees before the passage and say, “O Lord, open this passage to me! Give me something out of it. Teach me to understand it.” And it will not be long before God refreshes you with dainty portions from the tables of Paradise and makes your soul glad with choice morsels of royal dainties wherewith He feeds His own chosen ones!

But there is another way of getting spiritual meat, even when we have not our Bible with us. The Lord sometimes gives meat “unto them that fear Him,” by bringing Jesus Christ home to them, without the use of the Word—simply in meditation and communion. You know, Beloved, after all, that what a child of God feeds upon is Jesus Christ. When the Jews went to the Temple, they did not eat the tongs and fire shovels. They did not eat the garments of the priests and the bells and the pomegranates. They valued all these things, for they were made according to God’s orders and, therefore, they thought them precious. But they did, at the appointed season, eat the paschal lamb. So the Christian does not eat the Doctrines of the Word—he feeds on Christ! He loves the Truths of God. He loves the ordinances, he loves everything in the Bible for Christ’s sake. But his food is the Lamb, Himself! Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the real food for all the Lord’s chosen! And are there not most sweet and happy moments when the spirit is carried aloft in blessed communion, when Jesus Christ seems very present and very precious, when we lean our head on His bosom, when we seem to feel the very beating of His heart and to realize His love for us, when we lose ourselves in Him and almost forget that we have a separate existence? Then we are—

*“Plunged in His Godhead’s deepest sea,  
And lost in His immensity!”*

I was much struck, the other evening, at a Prayer Meeting, by the prayer of one of our Brothers, which came home to my heart. When he prayed, he said, “O Lord, give me Mary’s place—

*“‘Oh that I could forever sit  
With Mary at the Master’s feet!  
Be this my happy choice,  
My only care, delight and bliss,  
My joy, my Heaven on earth, be this,  
To hear the Bridegroom’s voice.’”*

He prayed that he might have Mary’s part and always sit at the feet of Jesus. But, by-and-by, the good man’s fervor increased and in his prayer he said, “No, my Master, I have not asked enough of You. Mary’s place is too low for me, if I may have a better one. Lift me up higher, Lord! Give me John’s place—

*“‘Oh, that I might, with favored John,  
Forever lean my head upon  
The bosom of my Lord!’”*

As he pleaded for that higher degree of communion between his soul and Christ, I thought, “Surely, now you have asked enough.” But, suddenly rising another flight on the wings of communion, like the eagle taking its last soar into the skies, he said, “No, Lord, John’s place does not suffice me. You have lifted me from Your feet to Your bosom, now lift me from Your bosom to Your lips.” Then, quoting the words of the spouse, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine,” he sweetly paraphrased it thus, “Let the lips of my petitioning meet the lips of Your benediction. Let the lips of my praise meet the lips of Your acceptance—so shall the kiss of love be consummated and my joy be complete.”

Yes, and when we, also, are favored to go through these various stages of fellowship with Christ—to go from the foot to the bosom and from the bosom to the lips. To go from the mere learner to be a friend and companion and then to go still higher—to be lifted up and to feel our fellowship with Christ by standing as high as He does and our lips being on His lips—it is there that the child of God almost insensibly receives strength and, like Elijah smitten by the angel, he rises up and finds his meat baked upon the coals, eats thereof and lives upon it for forty days! This is, indeed, a most precious mode of feeding for our souls!

But, somehow or other, God does give meat to His children and will never leave them to be famished. You have often noticed, I daresay, that when one means of feeding fails for God’s children, others become available and effective. You are sick and cannot be fed by the public ministry—you cannot go out to hear sermons—so God’s Word becomes more precious to you. Or, you have nobody to read to you and your sight has failed—generally, then, communion becomes more precious. One way or other, God will have His children fed.

II. We will now consider THE COVENANT. “He will always be mindful of His Covenant.”  
God has made many Covenants at divers times and none of these Covenants has He ever broken. Let me briefly mention these Covenants. There was the Covenant with Adam, the Covenant of Works—“Obey Me and you shall live; disobey Me and you shall die.” That Covenant God did not break. He did not subject Adam to pain or misery until he had first broken the Covenant and so became the inevitable heir of suffering. God made a Covenant with Noah that the waters should no more go over the earth—and the rainbow, the sign of that Covenant—has lit up the sky ever since at various intervals. And the earth has not been drowned with a flood a second time. He made a Covenant with Abraham, that he would give the land of Canaan to be the heritage of his seed. And that Covenant has He kept. Neither has He altered the thing that went out of His lips. He made a Covenant with David, that his seed should sit upon his throne and that Covenant He kept.  
But the Covenant here referred to is a better Covenant than all these, it is the Covenant of Grace. That is a sweet subject to preach upon! Suffer me to go back to the time when this Covenant was made. It is older than the oldest things that man has ever seen—the Covenant of Grace is more ancient than the everlasting hills. It was made by God with Christ for us before all worlds were created! God had foreseen that man would be a sinner. Jesus Christ and His Father were determined to save him and, therefore, a Covenant was made between them. God the Son, on His part, stipulated that He would suffer all the punishment which all the elect deserved to suffer—that He would offer a perfect righteousness on their behalf and pay all the demands of God’s justice. God the Father, on His part, covenanted that all the elect, being redeemed by the blood of Christ, would most certainly be accepted and saved. That is the Covenant of which God is always mindful.  
Some people believe in a rickety kind of Covenant which I could never find in the Bible—a Covenant that has conditions in it which you and I are to fulfill. If there were such a Covenant as that, it would not be a Covenant of Grace, but of works. If the Covenant of Grace were made with men—with those that should be saved, on condition of their believing—it would be as impossible for any man to be saved on that condition as it would be on the condition of obeying, since faith is no more possible to unaided man than is perfect obedience! Faith in Christ is as difficult a thing, to a man dead in trespasses and sins, as is perfect obedience to every command of God. The Covenant of Grace is a Covenant without any conditions on our part, whatever, of any sort, in any shape, in any form, or any fashion. The Covenant, in fact, is not made between us and God—it is made between God and Christ, our Representative. All the conditions of that Covenant are fulfilled so that there are none left for us to fulfill! The conditions were that Christ should suffer—and He has suffered. That Christ should obey—and He has obeyed. All that is done. And all that is now standing is the unconditional Covenant, that God will give to all His elect, though dead in sin, power to live! That He will give to them, though black, perfect cleansing in the fountain filled with blood! That He will give to them, though naked, a robe of perfect righteousness! That He will ultimately accept them to dwell with Him forever in Glory everlasting. This Covenant, on which our hopes are built, this glorious Covenant, is—  
*“Signed, sealed and ratified,  
In all things ordered well.”*  
Will God ever forget it? No, “He will always be mindful of His Covenant,” in everything that it guarantees and towards every person who is interested in it. God will not suffer one single promise of the Covenant to be unfulfilled, nor one single blessing of the Covenant to be kept back. Every iota, jot and tittle of the covenanted purpose of God shall be fulfilled—and everything which He has promised to His people in the Covenant, and which Christ has bought for His people through the Covenant—shall most infallibly be received by His people! As for the persons interested therein, not one of them shall be forgotten. If in the Covenant, they shall most assuredly be saved despite every attack of the devil, all their own wickedness, or any “accident,” so-called, of Providence, or whatever may happen! All who are in the Covenant must and shall be gathered in. The Arminian says there are some in the Covenant who tumble out of it—that God has chosen some men—that He justifies them, that He accepts them—and then turns them out of His family.

The Arminian holds the unnatural, cruel, barbarous idea that a man may be God’s child, and then God may disown him because he does not behave himself. The idea is revolting even to human sensibility! If our children sin, they are still our children—though chastened and punished—yet never do they cease to be numbered among our family. There are many of God’s children who have gone astray from Him and been chastened for it, but it were an idea too barbarous to suppose that God would disown His child for any sin he commits. He keeps fast His Covenant—He loves them, sinners though they may be. He keeps them from running riotously into sin, but when, sometimes, they go astray, as the best of them will, still His loving heart towards them is unchangeably the same!  
I do not serve the god of the Arminians at all! I have nothing to do with him and I do not bow down before the Baal they have set up! He is not my god, nor shall he ever be! I fear him not, nor tremble at his presence. A mutable god may be the god for the Arminian—he is not the god for me. My Jehovah changes not! The god that says today and denies tomorrow. That justifies today and condemns the next. The god that has children of his own one day and lets them be the children of the devil the next has no relation to my God in the least degree! He may be the relation of Ashtaroth or Baal, but Jehovah never was nor can be his name. Jehovah changes not! He knows no shadow of turning. If He has set His heart upon a man, He will love him to the end. If He has chosen him, He has not chosen him for any merit of his own—therefore He will never cast him away for any demerit of his own. If He has begotten him unto a lively hope, He will not suffer him to fall away and perish! That were a breaking of every promise and an abrogation of the Covenant! If one dear child of God might fall away, then might all. If one of those for whom the Savior died might be damned, then the Savior’s blood would be utterly void and vain. If one of those whom He has called according to His purpose might perish, then would His purpose be null and void. But, children of God, you may lay your heads upon the Covenant and say with Dr. Watts— **“Then should the earth’s old pillars shake And all the wheels of Nature break,  
Our steady souls should fear no more  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”**  
III. Now I close by noticing THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS HERE REFERRED TO—“them that fear Him.” Those who fear the Lord are in the Covenant of His Grace.  
The anxious enquirer or the young convert oftentimes says to the minister, “Sir, how can I know that I am elect?” And the usual answer is, “You have nothing to do with that—you may think of that matter, byand-by.” Begging the gentleman’s pardon, that is not true! A sinner has everything to do with it. Instead of having nothing to do with election, he has everything in the world to do with it. But it is said that he need not trouble his mind about it. Perhaps he should not, but he will, and it is no source of comfort to tell him that he ought not. If I have a toothache, it is poor comfort for a physician to tell me that I ought not to have it. So, when a sinner is troubled about the Doctrine of Election, it is poor comfort to tell him he ought not to be troubled. The best way is to go fairly through the whole question and say to him, “Do you fear the Lord? Then, so sure as you are a living man, you are elect. You have the fear of the Lord before your eyes—then you need have no doubt but that your name is in the Covenant.” None have feared the Lord who were not first loved by the Lord. Never did one come and cast himself at the feet of Jesus simply because he feared the penalty of sin. And none ever came to embrace the loving skirts of the Redeemer because he feared lest he should go astray without having been first called, chosen and made faithful. No, the fear of God in the heart is the proof of being God’s elect one. If we fear Him, we may believe that He will always give meat to us and that He will always keep His Covenant towards us which He has made for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
“But,” says one, “how am I to know whether I am elect?” Beloved, you cannot know it by any outward profession. You may be of any church in the world, or of no church, and yet be one of God’s elect. Nor can you know it even by the sentiments which you receive as being true, for you may know truth and yet not have truth in your soul. You may be orthodox in your head and heterodox in your heart. You may believe everything and yet be cast away at last. The only way whereby you can judge yourself is this—Do you fear the Lord? Do you reverence His name and His Sabbath? Have you trembled at His Word? Have you cast away your self-righteousness at His command? And have you come to Him and taken Christ to be your All-in-All? I do not ask you whether you fear Hell—many fear Hell who fear not God. Do you fear to offend a loving Father? Do you fear lest you should go astray from God’s commandments? Do you cry to Him—  
*“Savior, keep me lest I wander?”*  
Do you ask Him to preserve you? And can you honestly say that if you could be perfect, you would be? That you desire to be freed from sin? That you hate every false way? And is it your dally groaning to be set free from guilt and to be wholly surrendered to the Crucified? Lastly, can you say this after me—  
*“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I fall—  
He is my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my All?”*  
Then you are elect! Then you are justified! Then you are accepted and you have no more reason to doubt your acceptance and your election than you will have when you stand before the Throne of God, amid the blazing luster of eternal Glory! You are elect and you always were elect! God has chosen you. Your fearing Him is the evidence of it and your believing in Christ, without any righteousness of your own, is proof positive that you were chosen of God before the foundation of the world!  
Now what shall I say in conclusion? There are some of you who fear not God. Alas, for you, that you should be in a state so utterly miserable and pitiable, without the fear of God before your eyes! Oh, that God would teach you to fear Him! Oh, that He would break your hearts and so make you feel your ruined state as to bring you to His feet to receive the perfect righteousness of Christ—then would you fear Him—and then might you rejoice that He would give you meat and keep you in His Covenant.  
I think I hear one say, “I am a great sinner. I am in the very front rank of the army of guilt. I have truly transgressed and gone astray from the Most High. Tell me, did Jesus die for me? Did He die—not as some say He died, for all men—but in that special sense which ensures salvation?” I will answer you. Can you say, “I am a sinner,” not as a kind of idle compliment that most men pass when they say they are sinners and do not mean what the word implies, for they no more mean that they are sinners than that they are horses. But do you really believe that you are sinners deserving God’s wrath and the fire of Hell forever? Then the Lord Jesus died for you and, “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” If the word is to be understood in the sense in which Hart uses it when he says— *“A sinner is a sacred thing,  
The Holy Spirit has made him so”—*  
if you feel you are a sinner in that sense, Christ died for you.  
But you say, “I wish He had set my name down in the book, that I might read it.” Why, my Friend, if He had done so, you would believe it was intended for somebody else! If the book contained the name of Smith, on such a street, Smith would declare that there were so many Smiths that it could not be meant for him! And if you could read your name, you would still doubt that it could, by any possibility, be a description of you, since another person might bear the same title. But since it says, “sinners,” Satan himself cannot beat you out of that. God has taught you what the term, “sinner,” means and Satan cannot unteach you that. Are you, then, a sinner—fully, wholly, in all the black sense of the word? Then Christ died for you. Cast yourself upon that Truth of God— Christ died for sinners.  
“But,” you say, “Sir, if I were a little better, I might believe that He died for me.” I would not, for He died for sinners. Or you say, “If I were a saint, I might believe that He died for me.” I would not, for he died for sinners. Only prove yourself a sinner and you have proved that Christ died for you! Only be sure that you are a sinner, that you have revolted from God and that you know it—only confess with your heart your transgressions and take this title to yourself, and you may believe that Jesus died for you.  
Let me give you a lesson in logic—not from Whateley nor Watts, but from the logic of Faith. It is extraordinary how different are the conclusions of Faith from those of Reason. Once Reason came along and heard a man cry, “I am guilty, guilty.” She stopped and said, “The man is guilty. God condemns the guilty, therefore this man will be condemned.” She went away and left the man condemned, ruined and quivering with fear. Faith came and heard the same cry, rendered more bitter by the cruel syllogism of Reason. Faith stopped. She said, “The man is guilty, but Christ died for the guilty—therefore the man will be saved.” And her logic was correct—the man lifted up his head and rejoiced!  
Reason came one day and saw a man naked. And she said, “He has not on a wedding garment. Can naked souls appear before the bar of God? Should they have a place at the supper of the Lamb? The man is naked—he must be cast out for naked ones cannot enter Heaven!” Then Faith came by and said, “The man is naked. Christ worked a robe of righteousness—He must have made it for the naked—He would not have made it for those who have a robe of their own. That robe is for the naked man and he shall stand in it before God.” And her logic was correct and just. The other might seem strictly according to rule, but this was still better.

Reason one day heard a man say that he was very good and righteous. She saw him go up to the Temple and heard him pray, “Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men,” and Reason said, “That man is better than others and he will be accepted.” But she argued wrongly, for, lo, he went out and a poor sinner by his side, who could only say, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” went down to his house justified—while the proud Pharisee went on his way disregarded. The logic of Faith is to argue white from black, whereas the logic of Reason argues white from white.  
Luther says, “Once upon a time the devil came to me and said, ‘Martin Luther, you are a great sinner and you will be damned.’ ‘Stop, stop,’ I said, ‘one thing at a time! I am a great sinner, it is true, though you have no right to tell me of it. I confess it. What next?’ ‘Therefore you will be damned.’ ‘That is not good reasoning. It is true I am a great sinner, but it is written, ‘Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,’ therefore I shall be saved. Now go your way.’ So I drove off the devil with his own sword and he went away mourning because he could not cast me down by calling me a sinner.”  
I have a right to believe that Jesus Christ died for me and I cast myself wholly upon Him. Do the same, poor disconsolate one, for you have nothing of your own to depend upon! But you, O great, and good, and rich man, I have nothing to say to you!—  
*“Not the righteous,  
Sinners, Jesus came to save.”*  
While you have a rag of your own, you shall never have Christ’s robe! Go your way, your righteousness shall prove like the shirt of Hercules, when it burnt him and did eat his flesh away—though you glory in it, it shall be the winding-sheet of your soul forever.  
But if you have nothing and are poor, penniless and miserable— reduced to utter spiritual destitution and poverty—in God’s name I preach to you the Gospel! Christ died for you and you shall not perish. God will not punish Christ for us and then punish us afterwards. He will not demand the payment, first at His hands and then again, at ours. He is not unjust to punish, first, the Scapegoat, the Surety, the Substitute— and then to punish you. Christ was your Substitute—He bore your guilt, He carried your iniquities upon His head. Your sins were numbered upon Him and your punishment was laid upon Him!  
Go your way. You can never be punished. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. Rejoice in pardon bought with blood—be glad, be satisfied, be happy even till you die—and then you shall be happy forever!

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THE COVENANT  
NO. 3261

A SERMON  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“He will ever be mindful of His Covenant .”  
Psalm 111:5.*  
[Another Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon upon the same text, is #2681, Volume 56—Covenant Blessings— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT is an amazing thing that God should enter into gracious Covenant with men. That He should make man and be gracious to man is easily to be conceived, but that He should strike hands with his nature and put His august majesty under bond to him by His own promise is marvelous! Once let me know that God has made a Covenant and I do not think it amazing that He should be mindful of it, for He is “God that cannot lie.” “Has He said, and shall He not do it?” Has He once given His pledge? It is inconceivable that He should ever desert from it. The doctrine of the text commends itself to every reasonable and thoughtful man—if God has made a Covenant, He will ever be faithful of it. It is to that point that I would now call your attention with the desire to use it practically.

For God to make a gracious Covenant with us is so great a gift that I hope everyone here is saying within his heart, “Oh, that the Lord had entered into Covenant with me!”

We shall practically look into this matter, first, by answering the question, What is this Covenant? Secondly, by putting the enquiry, Have I any portion in it? And, thirdly, by bidding each one say, “If, indeed, I am in Covenant with God, then every part of that Covenant will be carried out, for God is ever mindful of it.”

I. First, then, WHAT IS THIS COVENANT?  
If you go to a lawyer and enquire how a deed runs, he may reply, “I can give you an abstract, but I had better read it to you.” He can tell you the sum and substance of it, but if you want to be very accurate—and it is a very important business—you will say, “I would like to hear it read.” We will now read certain parts of Scripture which contain the Covenant of Grace, or an abstract of it. Turn to Jeremiah 31:31-34—“Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My Covenant they broke, although I was an Husband unto them, says the Lord. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, says the Lord, I will put My Law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”  
Print every word of that in diamonds, for the sense is inconceivably precious! God in Covenant promises to His people that instead of writing His law upon tablets of stone, He will write it on the tablets of their hearts. Instead of the Law of God coming on a hard, crushing command, it shall be placed within them as the object of love and delight, written on the transformed nature of the beloved objects of God’s choice! “I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts”—what a Covenant privilege this is! “And I will be their God.” Therefore all that there is in God shall belong to them. “And they shall be My people.” They shall belong to Me. I will love them as Mine. I will keep them, bless them, honor them and provide for them as My people. I will be their portion and they shall be My portion.  
Note the next privilege. They shall all receive heavenly instruction upon the most vital point—“They shall all know Me.” There may be some things they do not know, but “they shall all know Me.” They shall know Me as their Father. They shall know Jesus Christ as their Brother. They shall know the Holy Spirit as their Comforter. They shall have communion and fellowship with God! What a Covenant privilege is this! Hence comes pardon, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” What a clean sweep of sin! God will forgive and forget—the two go together. “I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.” All gone—all their transgression blotted out, never to be mentioned against you again, forever! What an unutterable favor! This is the Covenant of Grace! I call your attention to the fact that there is no, “if,” in it! There is no, “but,” in it—there is no requirement made by it of man. It is all, “I will,” and, “they shall.” “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” It is a charter written in a royal tone and the majestic straining not marred by a “perhaps” or a “maybe”—but dwells always on, “shall,” and, “will.” These are two prerogative words of the Divine Majesty and in this wondrous deed of gift in which the Lord bestows a Heaven of Grace upon guilty sinners, He bestows it after the Sovereignty of His own will without anything to put the gift in jeopardy, or to make the promise insecure!  
Thus I have read the Covenant to you in one form.  
Turn over the pages a little and you will come to a passage in Ezekiel. There we shall have the bright-eyed Prophet—he who could live among the wheels and the seraphim—telling us what the Covenant of Grace is. In Ezekiel, the 11th Chapter, 19th and 20th verses, we read, “I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”  
You will find another form of it further on in the 36th of Ezekiel, beginning at the 25th verse. How intently ought you to listen to this! It is a deal better than hearing any preaching of mortal men to listen to the very words of God’s own Covenant—a Covenant which saves all those who are concerned in it! Unless you have an interest in it, you are, indeed, unhappy. Let us read it—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them...And you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” This promise always come in at the close, “I will be your God.” In this form of the Covenant, I call you again to witness that God demands nothing, asks no price, demands no payment—but to the people with whom He enters into Covenant, He makes promise after promise, all free, all unconditional, all made according to the bounty of His royal heart!  
Let us go into a little detail about this. God has made a Covenant with certain people that He will do all this for them—and in each case it is of pure Grace. He will take away their own hearts—it is clear from the promise that when He began with them, they had stony hearts. He will forgive their iniquities—when He began with them, they had many iniquities. He will give them a heart of flesh—when He began with them, they had not a heart of flesh. He will turn them to keep His statutes—when He began with them, they did not keep His statutes. They were a sinful, willful, wicked, degenerate people and He called to them many times to come to Him and repent—but they would not. Here He speaks like a king and no longer pleads, but decrees! He says, I will do this and that to you and you shall be this and this in return. Oh, blessed Covenant! Oh, mighty, Sovereign Grace!

How came it about? Learn the Doctrine of the two Covenants.  
The first Covenant of which we will now speak was that of Works, the Covenant made with our first father, Adam. This is not first in purpose, but it was first revealed in time. It ran thus—You, Adam, and your posterity shall live and be happy if you will keep My Law. To test your obedience to Me, there is a certain tree—if you let it alone, you shall live. If you touch it, you shall die, and they whom you represent shall die.  
Our first Covenant head snatched greedily at the forbidden fruit and fell—and what a Fall was there, my Brothers and Sisters! There you and I, and all of us, fell down while it was proven once and for all that by works of the Law no man can be justified! For if perfect Adam broke the Law so readily, depend upon it, you and I would break any Law that God had ever made! There was no hope of happiness for any of us by a Covenant which contained an, “if,” in it. That Old Covenant is put away, for it has utterly failed. It brought nothing to us but a curse—and we are glad that it has waxed old and, as far as Believers are concerned, has vanished!  
Then there came the Second Adam. You know His name, He is the ever-blessed Son of the Highest. This Second Adam entered into Covenant with God somewhat after this fashion—The Father said, I give You a people; they shall be Yours: You must die to redeem them and when You have done this—when for their sakes You have kept My Law and made it honorable—when for their sakes you have borne My wrath against their transgressions—then I will bless them. They shall be My people. I will forgive their iniquities. I will change their natures. I will sanctify them and make them perfect. There was an apparent, “if,” in this Covenant at the first. That “if” hinged upon the question whether the Lord Jesus would obey the Law and pay the ransom—a question which His faithfulness placed beyond doubt! There is no “if” in it, now. When Jesus bowed His head and said, “It is finished,” there remained no “if” in the Covenant! It stands, therefore, now as a Covenant entirely of one side, a Covenant of promises—of promises which must be kept because the other portion of the Covenant having been fulfilled—the Father’s side of it must stand! He cannot and He will not draw back from the doing of that which He covenanted with Christ to do! The Lord Jesus shall receive the joy which was set before Him. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” By His knowledge shall the Christ who became God’s righteous Servant justify many, for has He not borne their iniquities? How can it be otherwise than that they should be accepted for whom He was the Surety? Do you see why it is that the Covenant, as I have read it, stands so absolutely without, “ifs,” “buts,” and, “perhapses,” and runs only on, “shalls,” and, “wills”? It is because the one side of it that did look uncertain was committed into the hands of Christ, who cannot fail or be discouraged! He has completed His part of it and now it stands fast and must stand fast forever and ever! This is now a Covenant of pure Grace and nothing else but Grace! Let no man attempt to mix up works with it, or anything of human merit! God saves now because He chooses to save—and over the head of us all there comes a sound as of a martial trumpet and yet with a deep, inner peaceful music in it—“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” God observes us all lost and ruined and, in His Infinite Mercy, comes with absolute promises of Divine Grace to those whom He has given to His Son Jesus.  
So much, then, with regard to the Covenant.  
II. Now comes the important question, “HAVE I ANY PORTION IN IT?” May the Holy Spirit help us to ascertain the Truth of God on this point! You who are really anxious in your hearts to know, I would earnestly persuade to read the Epistle to the Galatians. Read that Epistle through if you want to know whether you have any part or lot in the Covenant of Grace. Did Christ fulfill the Law for me? Are the promises of God, absolute and unconditional, made to me? You can know by answering three questions.  
First, Are you in Christ? Did you not notice that I said that we were all in Adam and in Adam we all fell? Now, “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Are you in the Second Adam? You certainly were in the first one, for so you fell! Are you in the Second? Because if you are in Him, you are saved in Him! He has kept the Law for you. The Covenant of Grace made with Him was made with you if you are in Him, for as surely as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him, so were all Believers in the loins of Christ when He died upon the Cross! If you are in Christ, you are a part and parcel of the Seed to whom the promise was made—but there is only one seed, and the Apostle tells us—“He says not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of One, And to your Seed, which is Christ.” If, then, you are in Christ, you are in the Seed—and the Covenant of Grace was made with you!  
I must ask you another question. Have you faith? By this question you will be helped to answer the previous one, for Believers are in Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, you will find that the mark of those who are in Christ is that they believe in Christ. The mark of all that are saved is not confidence in work, but faith in Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul insists upon it, “The just shall live by faith,” and the Law is not of faith. Over and over again he puts it so. Come, then, do you believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart? Is He your sole hope for Heaven? Do you lean your whole weight, the entire stress of your salvation, on Jesus? Then you are in Him and the Covenant is yours—and there is not a blessing which God has decreed to give but what He will give to you! There is not a gift which out of the grandeur of His heart, He has determined to bestow upon His elect but what He will bestow it upon you! You have the mark, the seal, the badge of His chosen if you believe in Christ Jesus!  
Another question should help you. It is this—Have you been bornagain? I refer you again to the Epistle to the Galatians which I would like every anxious person to read through very carefully. There you will see that Abraham had two sons. One of them was born according to the flesh. He was Ishmael, the child of the bondwoman. Though he was the first-born son, he was not the heir, for Sarah said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.” He who was born after the flesh did not inherit the Covenant promise! Is your hope of Heaven fixed on the fact that you had a good mother and father? Then your hope is born after the flesh and you are not in the Covenant! I am constantly hearing it said that children of godly parents do not need converting. Let me denounce that wicked lie! “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing better! They that are born after the flesh—those are not the children of God! Do not trust in gracious descent, or in holy ancestors! You must be born-again, every one of you, or you will perish forever, whoever your parents may be! Abraham had another son, even Isaac—he was not born of the strength of his father, nor after the flesh at all—for we are told that both Abraham and Sarah had become old. Isaac was born by God’s power according to promise. He was the child given by Grace. Now, have you ever been born like that—not by human strength but by Divine Power? Is the life that is in you a life given by God? The true life is not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of natural excellence—it comes by the working of the Holy Spirit and is of God. If you have this life, you are in the Covenant, for it is written, “in Isaac shall your Seed be called.” The children of the promise, these are counted for the seed. God said to Abraham, “In your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” and that was because He meant to justify the Gentiles by faith, that the blessing given to believing Abraham might come on all Believers! Abraham is the father of the faithful, or the father of all them that believe in God—and with such is the Covenant established.  
Here, then, are the test questions—Am I in Christ? Am I believing in Jesus? Am I born by the power of the Spirit of God according to the promise, and not by the fleshly birth, or according to works? Then I am in the Covenant! My name stands in the eternal record! Before the stars began to shine, the Lord had covenanted to bless me. Or before evening and morning made the first day, my name was in His Book of Life. Christ, before the world’s foundation, struck hands with the Father in the council chamber of eternity and pledged Himself to redeem me and to bring me and multitudes of others into His eternal Glory! And He will do it, too, for He never breaks His suretyship engagements any more than the Father breaks His Covenant engagements! I want you to get quite sure upon these points, for oh, what peace it will breed in your soul, what a restfulness of heart to understand the Covenant and to know that your name is in it!  
III. This is our last point. If, indeed, we can believe upon the good evidence of God’s Word—that we are of the Seed with whom the Covenant was made in Christ Jesus—then EVERY BLESSING OF THE COVENANT WILL COME TO US. I will put it a little more personally—every blessing of the Covenant will come to you!  
The devil says, “No, it, won’t.” Why not, Satan? “Why,” he says, “you are not able to do this or that.” Refer the devil to the text! Tell him to read those passages which I read to you and ask him if he can spy an, “if,” or a, “but,” for I cannot. “Oh,” he says, “but, but, but, but, but you cannot do enough, you can’t feel enough.” Does it say anything about feeling there? It only says, “I will give them a heart of flesh.” They will feel enough then! “Oh, but,” the devil says, “you cannot soften your hard heart.” Does it say that you are to do so? Does it not say, “I will take the stony heart out of their flesh”? The tenor of it is—I will do it. I WILL DO IT. The devil dares not say that God cannot do it—he knows that God can enable us to tread him under our feet. “Oh, but,” he says, “you will never hold on your way if you begin to be a Christian.” Does it say anything about that in the Covenant further than this, “they shall walk in My statutes”? What if we have not power in and of ourselves to continue in God’s statutes? Yet

 He has power to make us continue in them! He can work obedience and final perseverance in holiness in us. His Covenant virtually promises these blessings to us. To came back to what we said before—God does not ask of us, but He gives to us! He sees us dead and He loves us even when we are dead in trespasses and sins! He sees us feeble and unable to help ourselves—and He comes in and works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure—and then we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The bottom of it, the very foundation of it, is Himself! And He finds nothing in us to help Him. There is neither fire nor wood in us, much less the lamb for the burnt offering—all is emptiness and condemnation! He comes in with, “I will,” and, “you shall,” like a royal helper affording free aid to destitute, helpless sinners, according to the riches of His Grace! Now be sure that, having made such a Covenant as this, God will ever be mindful of it!  
He will do so, first, because He cannot lie. If He says He will, He will. His very name is “God That Cannot Lie.” If I am in Christ, I must be saved—none can prevent it. If I am a Believer in Christ, I must be saved—all the devils in Hell cannot stop it, for God has said, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” God’s word is not, yes, and, no. He knew what He said when He spoke the Covenant and He has never changed it, nor contradicted it. If, then, I am a Believer, I must be saved, for I am in Christ to whom the promise is made! If I have the new Life in me, I must be saved, for is not this spiritual Life the living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever? Did not Jesus say, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”? I have drunk the water Christ gave me and it must spring up into everlasting life! It is not possible for death to kill the Life that God has given me, nor for all the fallen spirits to tread out the Divine fire which Christ’s own Spirit has cast into my bosom! I must be saved, for God cannot deny Himself!  
Next, God made the Covenant freely. If He had not meant to keep it, He would not have made it. When a man is driven up into a corner by someone who says, “Now you must pay me,” then he is apt to promise more than he can perform. He solemnly declares, “I will pay you this day fortnight.” Poor fellow, he has no money, now, and will not have any then, but he makes a promise because he cannot help himself. No such necessity can be imagined with our God! The Lord was under no compulsion— He might have left men to perish because of sin—there was no one to prompt Him to make the Covenant of Grace, or even to suggest the idea! “With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him?” He made the Covenant of His own royal will and, having made it, rest you sure that He will never run back from it! A Covenant so freely made must be fully carried out.

Moreover, on the Covenant document there is a seal. Did you see the seal? The grand thing in a deed of gift is the signature or seal. What is this—this red splash at the bottom of it? It is blood! Yes, it is blood. Whose blood? It is the blood of the Son of God! This has ratified and sealed the Covenant. Jesus died. Jesus’ death has made the Covenant sure! Can God forget the blood of His dear Son, or do despite to His Sacrifice? Impossible! All for whom He died as a Covenant Substitute He will save! His redeemed shall not be left in captivity, as if the ransom price had effected nothing. Has He not said, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and he that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out”? That Covenant stands secure, though earth’s old columns bow, for despite to the blood can never be possible on the part of the Father.

Again, God delights in the Covenant and so we are sure He will not run back from it. It is the very joy of His holy heart! He delights to do His people good. To pass by transgression, iniquity and sin is the recreation of Jehovah! Did you ever hear of God singing? It is singular that the Divine One should solace Himself with song, but yet a Prophet has thus revealed the Lord to us, “He will rest in His love; He will joy over you with singing.” The Covenant is the heart of God written out in the blood of Jesus—and since the whole Nature of God runs parallel with the tenor of the Everlasting Covenant—you may rest assured that even its jots and its tittles stand secure!

And then, last of all, O you who are in the Covenant, do not doubt that God will save you, keep you, bless you seeing you have believed on Jesus, are in Jesus and are quickened into newness of life! You dare not doubt if I tell you one thing more—if your father, if your brother, if your dearest friend had solemnly stated a fact, would you bear for anybody to say that he lied? I know you would be indignant at such a charge! But suppose your father, in the most solemn manner, had taken an oath— would you for a minute think that he had perjured himself and had sworn a lie? Now turn to the Word of God and you will find that God, because He knew that an oath among men is the end of strife, has been pleased to seal the Covenant with an oath. “That by two Immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” God has lifted His hand to Heaven and sworn that Christ shall have the reward of His passion, that His purchased ones shall be brought under His sway, that having borne sin and put it away, it never shall be a second time charged on His redeemed!

There is all of it. Do you believe in Christ? Then God will work in you to will and do of His good pleasure! God will conquer your sin! God will sanctify you! God will save you! God will keep you! God will bring you to Himself at last! Rest on that Covenant and then, moved by intense gratitude, go forward to serve your Lord with all your heart, and soul and strength! Being saved, live to praise Him! Work not that you may be saved, but because you are saved—the Covenant has secured your safety! Delivered from the servile fear which an Ishmael might have known, live the joyous life of an Isaac! And moved by love of the Father, spend and be spent for His sake! If the selfish hope of winning Heaven by works has moved some men to great sacrifice, much more shall the godly motive of gratitude to Him who has done all this for us move us to the noblest service and make us feel that it is no sacrifice at all! “We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” “You are not your own, you are bought with a price.” If you are saved under the Covenant of Grace, the mark of the covenanted ones is upon you and the sacred character of the covenanted ones should be displayed in you! Bless and magnify your Covenant God! Take the cup of the Covenant and call upon His name! Plead the promises of the Covenant and have whatever you need! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JEREMIAH 31:1-22.**

Verse 1. At the same time, says the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. During the Israelites’ banishment to Babylon, God’s Covenant with them had been, as it were, in abeyance. But in this promise of their restoration, He brings it to the front, again, and He gives a peculiarly gracious turn to it—“I will be the God of all the families of Israel.” What a mercy it is to have a family God and to have our whole family in Christ! Brothers and Sisters, you have a family Bible and you have, I hope, a family altar—may your whole family belong to God!

2. Thus says the LORD, the people which were left of the sword found Grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. Pharaoh tried to kill Israel. When he drew his sword, it looked as if the whole nation would be slain. But God got them away from Pharaoh into the wilderness—and there He caused them to rest. God still has a people whom He will certainly save and the adversary shall not be able to destroy them. Now comes this glorious verse—

3, 4. The LORD has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn

you. [See Sermons #1914, Volume 32—SECRET DRAWINGS GRACIOUSLY EXPLAINED; #2149, Volume 36—EVERLASTING LOVE REVEALED and #2880, Volume 50—NEW TOKENS OF ANCIENT LOVE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Again

I will build you and you shall be built. Jerusalem was all broken down. Her houses were vacant and her palaces were in ruins, but God’s promise to her was, “Again I will build you, and you shall be built.” If the preacher tries to rebuild those who are spiritually broken down, his work may be a failure. But when God does it, it is effectually done.

4. O virgin of Israel: you shall again be adorned with your tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry. God can take away His people’s sorrow and fill them with exultant joy. Their flying feet shall follow the flying music and they shall be exceedingly glad. May the Lord make His people joyful, now, in His House of Prayer!

5. You shall yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. God’s people shall get to work, again, and they shall have the fruit of their toil and shall rejoice before God because they do not labor in vain nor spend their strength for nothing.

6. For there shall be a day that the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise you, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. The men of Ephraim did not go up to Zion to worship—they forsook the one altar at Jerusalem. But the day will come when they will turn again to the Lord! Watchmen have to be on the lookout for enemies, but the day will come when even they shall be able to leave their watchtowers and say, “Let us go up to Zion unto Jehovah our God.” Are any of you watching just now with anxious eyes? Have you been watching all through the night? Well, you have not seen much and your eyes ache with looking out for evil—so drop your watching, now, and say, one to another, “Let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.”

7, 8. For thus says the LORD, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations, publish you, praise you, and say, O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them! Notice the prayer and the answer. The prayer is put into our mouths and before we hardly have time to utter it, the answer comes—“O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them!”

8. From the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame. How can they come? Will they help one another? God Himself will be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame!

8. The woman with child and her that travails with child together: a great company shall return there. They were not fit for traveling, yet God, in His great mercy, can make the feeblest of His people strong! And when He means to bring them to Himself, they shall come even though it looks as if they could not come!

9. They shall come with weeping. Never mind the weeping, as long as they do but come, and remember that there is no true faith without the tear of repentance in its eye—“They shall come with weeping.”

9. And with supplications will I lead them. The way of prayer is the way home to God.  
9. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble. Happy are the people who have such precious promises as these! The way is to be straight and their feet are to be so firmly planted in it that “they shall not stumble.”  
9-11. For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born. Hear the word of the LORD, O you nations, and declare it in the isles afar off and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock. For the LORD has redeemed Jacob. The secret of every other blessing is redemption! If God has redeemed, He will save— depend upon it—the precious blood of Jesus shall never be shed in vain!

11, 12. And ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come. If they are redeemed, “they shall come.” Christ did not die in vain! The redemption that He worked must be effectual—“therefore they shall come.”

12. And sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd. These are all temporal mercies and it is a great blessing to see God’s goodness in them. If God blesses common mercies, they are blessings, indeed! But without His blessing they may become idols and so may become curses.

12. And their soul shall be as a watered garden. What a delightful simile! It is of little use for the body to be fed unless the soul is also well nourished! “Their soul shall be as a watered garden.”

12-14 . And they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness. God will give the spiritual leaders of His people enough and more than enough—more than they can take in—He will satiate them with fatness.

14. And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD. What a delightful promise this is! Listen to it and carry it home, all of you who are truly the Lord’s people.

15. Thus says the LORD, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. There is here a prophetic allusion to the massacre of the infants by Herod at the time of the birth of our Lord. It was a time of sorrow, indeed.

16, 17. Thus says the LORD; Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears: for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD: and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in your end, says the LORD, that your children shall come again to their own border. As Rachel is represented as weeping for her children, so is she represented as mourning for the tribes that were carried away into captivity. Yet is she comforted with the Lord’s gracious assurance—“they shall come again from the land of the enemy.” So they did, and there is to be a glorious future yet for the people of God of the ancient race of Abraham!

18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus. [See Sermon #743,  
Volume 13—EPHRAIM BEMOANING HIMSELF—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There is never a penitent in this world bemoaning himself without God hearing him! Do not think that a single penitential cry ever rises unheeded from a contrite heart! That cannot be—God has a quick ear for the cries of penitents.

18. You have chastened me, and I was chastened as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. “I bore the chastisement, but derived no benefit from it. I have not repented of my sin, I have not turned unto You.”

18. Turn You me, and I shall be turned, [See Sermon #2104, Volume 35—THE IN  
NER SIDE OF CONVERSION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at  
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] for you are the LORD, my God. If the Lord undertakes to turn us, we shall be truly turned—that is, converted.

19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yes, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Are there any here recollecting the past with terror, and lamenting before God because of their sins? Then hear what God says! He seems to echo the voice of Ephraim. As Ephraim bemoans himself, God bemoans him!

20. Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? You might expect the answer to be, “No, he has lost the rights of childhood. He has been unpleasant and provoking to God.” Yet God does not give such an answer as that to His own questions, but He says—

20. For since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Notwithstanding that the Lord threatened him, and sent Prophets to foretell evil to him because of his sin, yet He says, “I do earnestly remember him still.”

20. Therefore my heart is troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him says the LORD. What a wonderful speech for God to make! Even the infinitely-blessed God represents Himself as in trouble concerning penitent sinners, remembering them in pity and longing to have mercy upon them.

21. Set you up signs, make you high heaps: set your heart toward the highway, even the way which you went: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these your cities. In crossing the desert, travelers raise little mounds of stone that they may be directed on a future occasion across that pathless sea of sand. And so God bids them set up signs and make high heaps that they may know how to come back to Him.

22. How long will you go about, O you backsliding daughter? God still asks in pity, “how long will you seek here and there for comfort?” You will never find it till you come back to your God! Emptiness is written upon everything till the heart comes to its Savior and Lord!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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HEART’S EASE

NO. 647

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” Psalm 112:7.**

THE last month has been a peculiarly gloomy season. Evil tidings have followed on one another’s heels like Job’s messengers. Epidemics have been rampant among our families and many are the early graves which have been filled by contagious diseases. It is greatly to be feared that the cholera is stretching its wings of death and hastening to find its prey in our crowded lanes and alleys. The disease among the cattle is cutting off the herd from the stall and polluting the most substantial food of man. And it is much to be feared that the continual showers must be spoiling much of the uncrated corn and causing serious loss to farmers in the more northern counties.

In the newspapers of the last few weeks there has been a constant succession of the most fearful crimes. Scarcely have we known a period in which persons disposed to be melancholy might more thoroughly indulge their taste for the darkest apprehensions and forebodings. Cheerful as I am, I could, in some degree, sympathize with a good old saint with whom I sat a few minutes the other night. He began to lament our national sins and tremble at the presence of what he conceived to be national judgments. Though I am very far from being troubled with uneasy forecasts, yet I freely admit that old age and long experience may justly suggest to us earnest searching of heart because of the ills of the present period.

More terrible than rumor of plague or infectious disease of our cattle is the manifest fact that Popery is advancing among us with giant strides. Turn which way we will, Popery—Romish or Anglican—reeks in our nostrils! It is no longer engaged in secretly undermining our bulwarks—it has set its ladder to the wall and is scaling the ramparts! The Popish party in the Establishment, supported by the undoubted superstition of the National Prayer Book, now seeks to regain its ancient prominence while its allies without are moving Heaven and earth to win this nation to the dominion of Antichrist.

Meanwhile, there are numerous causes for mourning in the Church of God itself—many defections, many departing from first principles and fundamental doctrines—and some, who did run well, suddenly turning aside and proving that they had never run in the power and energy of the Spirit of God. If one preferred the night side of life, one might sit down and readily gather congenial shades of cloud and mist about one’s head and heart. But what good would this do? Despondency wins no victories! Let us pluck up courage and go to our

 knees and to our God!

Those who have laid hold on Christ Jesus and are resting in the Father’s love and power have no reason to be disquieted—should all Hell be unmuzzled and all earth be unhinged—they may rejoice with a joy un

dampened by carnal fear or earthly sorrow! They have found a secret source of supply from which they can draw, if all earth’s wells should suddenly run dry—for all their fresh springs are in their God! Of each Believer, when full of faith, it is true, “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings— his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

I. To come directly to the text. EVIL TIDINGS MAY COME TO THE BEST OF MEN—to those whose hearts are fixed and are trusting in the Lord. It may be of great service to us to remember this dreary fact, for it may lead us to let go of earthly things. Let us chew this very bitter morsel for a moment or two—there is nothing very palatable or pleasant in the recollection that we are not above the shafts of adversity, but it may humble us and prevent our boasting with the Psalmist, “My mountain stands firm: I shall never be moved.” It may stay us from taking too deep root in this soil from which we are so soon to be transplanted into the heavenly garden.

1. Let us remember the frail tenure upon which we hold our temporal mercies—how soon may evil tidings come concerning them! We rightly class our families first in our possessions. We look with delight into the faces of our children. We mark their growing abilities. We are charmed with evidences of opening intelligence—yet they may never live to manhood—their sun may go down before it is yet noon. We are, perhaps, perplexed as to what we shall do with them when they shall be old enough to be apprenticed to a trade, or initiated into a profession. But we may never have that task to care for—long before they reach that period of life they may be slumbering in their graves.

We gaze with ever fresh delight upon those beloved ones with whom we are united in the ties of wedlock, but if we gaze wisely we shall clearly see mortality written upon the fairest brow and glistening in the most loving eyes! How soon may these partners of our heart’s best affections be torn away from us! We must beware of making idols of those who are nearest and dearest, for the objects of our idolatry may soon, like the golden calf, be dashed in pieces and we may have to drink the waters of bitterness because of our sin.

If we would remember that all the trees of earth are marked with the woodman’s axe, we should not be so ready to build our nests in them. We should love, but we should love with the love which expects death and which reckons upon separations. Our dear relations are but loaned to us and the hour when we must return them to the Lender’s hand may be even at the door. The same is certainly true of our worldly goods. Do not riches take to themselves wings and fly away? And though we have heard some almost profanely say that they have clipped the wings of their riches so that they cannot fly away, yet the bird of prey may rend them where they are, and the rotting carcass of the wealth which the owners cannot enjoy may be a perpetual curse to them.

Full often gold and silver canker in the coffer and fret the soul of their claimant. God can do with us as with Israel—“While the meat was yet in their mouths, the curse of God came upon them.” What substance have we beneath the skies? Is not what we call substance a mere shadow soon departing? Your good substantial ship has often returned from her voyage to enrich her owner and just now she flies before a favoring gale. But there are storms and hurricanes and sunken reefs and quicksand—and who knows how soon your promising venture and the vessel which bears it may sink into the briny sea?

There stands your warehouse—it is full of merchandize upon which, with but a fair profit, great wealth may be obtained! But a fire may come and there may happen to be no insurance, or by a change of market, profit may wither into loss. Your present prosperity may soon be turned into distress by the failure of some larger warehouse, the dishonoring of large bills, a breach of credit, or an unexpected drain of capital. How often have enterprises high as the tower of Babel suddenly rocked and reeled and fallen in total ruin? This world, at best, is but a sandy foundation and the wisest builder may well look for an end to the most substantial of its erections.

Evil tidings may also come to us in another respect—we may suddenly find our health decay. That strength which now enables us to perform our daily business with delight may so fail us that the slightest exertion may cause us pain. Although unconscious of so sad a fact, we may be, even now, fostering within our bodies the disease which is destined to stretch us upon the bed of sickness. We should be prepared for the days of darkness, for they are many. The day of sickness would not overtake us as a thief if we were wise enough to remember that we are dust. Frail flowers of the field, we must not reckon upon blooming forever.

Spring lasts not all the year—the time of the sere and yellow leaf must come and the frosts of winter must nip our root. Why should I suppose that I am to enjoy an immunity from the common ills of mankind? Am I not among those who are born of woman? Is it not written that all such are “of few days and full of trouble”? Do not the “sparks fly upward” from my hearth? And why, then, should I suppose that I am not “born to trouble” like the rest of my race? It were well for us if we would remember that there is a time appointed for weakness and sickness. Then we should be more thankful for the privilege of going up to the Lord’s House, since the day comes when we can no longer go up Zion’s hill.

While we can serve God let us remember that the time may come when we shall rather have to fear than to do—when we can only glorify Him by suffering and not by earnest activity. Be it ours to live while we live and snatch the present moment out of the jaws of Time. And while the evil days come not, nor the days draw near in which we shall say we have no pleasure in them, let us serve God with both our hands and spend and be spent in His service! There is no single point in which we can hope to escape from the sharp arrows of affliction. The fondest hope which you and I have cherished may yet drop like the fruit of the tree before it is ripe— destroyed at the core by a secret worm.

Set not your affections upon things of earth—set your whole heart upon things above, for here the rust corrupts and the moth devours and the thief breaks through—but there all joys are perpetual and eternal! What is there here, after all, but cloud land? Why seek we to be lords of acres of mere mist? What are earth’s treasures but vapor? Will you heap up for yourself haze and fog? Cloud and mist will pass away and if these are

your riches, how poverty-stricken will you be when you can carry none of these airy riches into the land of solid wealth!

Christian, remember well the insecurity of all earthly things and be content to have it so! Certain expositors refer this passage to slander and reproach, and they translate it, “He shall not be afraid of evil hearing.” It is one of the sharpest trials of the Christian’s life to be misunderstood, misrepresented and belied. But any man who will serve his Master well must make up his mind to endure much of this affliction. The more prominent you are in Christ’s service, the more certain are you to be the butt of jokes.

I have long ago said farewell to my character—I lost it in the earlier days of my ministry by being a little more zealous than suited a slumbering age! And I have never been able to regain it except in the sight of Him who judges all the earth, and in the hearts of those who love me for my work’s sake. Beloved fellow-laborers in the vineyard of the Lord Jesus, you must all set your account upon being despised and reproached for His dear sake! You weaker ones come to your minister and say, “So-and-So has spoken evil of me.” What? Young Friend, is this a strange thing? Did this never happen to anybody before?

You sit down and cry, “It will break my heart! This cruel report will be the death of me!” Was no one else ever broken in heart by reproach? Did nobody else have his character besmeared by the fingers of envy and the tongue of tale-bearing? Who are you, my fine Sir, that you should escape? Gentle Sister, who are you that you are never to be abused? Humble yourself and do not be so proud as to think a special escape should be made for you when your Lord and all His followers have had to endure much contradiction of sinners!

Woe unto you when all men speak well of you! It is a blessing to attain to such a state that you care no more than the rock cares for the raging billows what men may say, so long as you have a conscience void of offense both toward God and toward man! In all these things, we ought to expect evil tidings.

2. Evil tidings will also come to us concerning spiritual matters, and babes in Grace will be greatly alarmed. Every now and then there comes a messenger with breathless haste who tells us that the sages have discovered that the Bible is a lie. Years ago we were all astonished to find that people had been digging down into the earth and had brought up loads of very hard stones with which Revelation was to be slain, like Stephen by the Jews. Revelation has lived on wonderfully well and flourished amazingly, notwithstanding all that!

Another very judicious naturalist afterwards discovered—and oh, what consternation there was—that we had all sprung from monkeys and that all living creatures were the result of successive developments from infusible atoms! Somehow or other the Gospel has managed to survive even this tremendous blow! Not many months ago a learned quarryman dug up a jawbone and a bushel or two of pointed flints—the undoubted property of primeval men who lived—according to report, ages before Adam!

Now this discovery was to silence forever the teachings of Inspiration. Those flints were invincible and deadly weapons! But the religion of Jesus is so full of life that her deadliest foes cannot make an end of her! Voltaire, you remember, had a printing press at Geneva some years ago with which he printed a prophecy that Christianity would not survive the century of which he thought himself the bright and shining light! That very press is now printing copies of the Bible in Geneva!

A few weeks ago we were informed ethnologically that Negroes were nearly allied to apes and that the Scripture statement that God has made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth was clearly contrary to fact. But, my Brethren, this grand old Book manages still to survive and I think the most of us who know its value can say we are not afraid of evil tidings which prophesy the overthrow of its authority—for it will see all its foes withered in the grass and yet not one of its jots or tittles shall pass away!

Our heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord! We can leave these gentlemen to the old women among us, whose experimental acquaintance with the power of godliness will be as a two-edged sword to slay the enemies’ sounding professions of superior intelligence. The blind and the lame in the Lord’s army shall laugh to scorn the champions of the Philistines, for the Lord of Hosts is with us as our Captain, and Jesus rides forth conquering and to conquer!

Sadder tidings at times afflict us. We hear, dear Friends, that professors have fallen. What a thunderclap it seems when we are told that suchand- such a prominent member has forsaken the path of rectitude, or a minister has departed from sound doctrine. Yes, and we must expect this. Judas and Demas will be represented over and over again and even Simon Magus will not be wanting in the Church as long as it is here below. We shall, moreover, hear that success has vanished where once it ruled. We may preach the Gospel and win thousands of souls—but suddenly there may be no conversions and those who are the warmest adherents of the Truth of God may gradually grow cold.

Be ready for these things! There have been ebbs and flows in the Church in all ages. And her progress has been like that of the ocean when it comes to its flood—it has been by a succession of in-rolling waves and waves that fall back again into the sea. So will it be till Christ comes. We shall also hear evil tidings about ourselves. Satan will tell us that we are hypocrites and conscience will remind us of sundry things which raise the suspicion that we are not soundly regenerated. It will be a blessed thing if then we can fly again to the Cross of Jesus Christ!

If the Law thunders at us and gives us evil tidings of wrath to come, happy are we if we can fly to the great Law-Fulfiller and find a shelter from the Law’s clamorous demands. But we must expect this. No saint gets to Heaven without being attacked by Satan. An old Divine said that the way to Heaven passed by the mouth of Hell. You must have spiritual conflicts. How could you be crowned if you did not fight and how could you win the victory if you knew no battle?

3. Moreover, to conclude the list, the evil tidings of death will soon be brought to you by the appointed messenger. How evil are the solemn tidings of departure to the most of men! The message will be given to us,

“The Master is come and calls for you.” We shall see the spirit-finger which beckons down to the cold flood of Jordan—but we shall not fear those evil tidings! No! Faith shall count them a blessed message and we shall march cheerfully onward where Jesus leads the way!

In eternity there shall be the evil tidings of the angelic trumpet, evil to all but saints! “Arise, you dead and come to judgment.” The general summons shall gather together all nations of men to stand before the dread tribunal, but truly in that case our heart shall be so fixed—no—flooded with Divine delights! With joy shall we receive the resurrection and with transport stand to be acquitted at the Judgment Seat!

I have thus marshaled before you a line of grim-visaged messengers— any one of whom may, within a moment—rush into your chamber, crying, “Tidings! Man of God! Tidings!”

II. Now for a second and more cheerful thought. A CHRISTIAN AT NO TIME OUGHT TO FEAR EITHER AN EXPECTATION OF EVIL TIDINGS OR WHEN THE TIDINGS ACTUALLY ARRIVE. Under no conceivable circumstances ought you, Christian, to be afraid. And why? Because, if you are troubled and distressed and distracted, what do you more than other men?

Other men have not your God to fly to! They are not favorites of Heaven as you are! They have never proved the faithfulness of God as you have done and it is no wonder if they are bowed down with alarm and cowed with fear—but as for you—you profess to be of another spirit! You testify to the world that God dwells in you, and you in Him! You say that you have been begotten again unto a lively hope! You testify that your heart lives in Heaven and not on earthly things!

Now, if you are seen to be distracted as other men, what is the value of that Divine Grace which you profess to have received? Where is the dignity of that new Nature which you claim to possess? Surely, dear Brothers and Sisters, unless you would be suspected of having boasted beyond your measure, you must not be afraid of evil tidings! Again, if you should be filled with alarm, as others are, you would, doubtless, be led into the sins so common to others under trying circumstances.

The ungodly, when they are overtaken by evil tidings, rebel against God. They murmur and think that God deals harshly with them. Will you fall into that same sin? Will you provoke the Lord as they do? If you are the subject of the same distraction, you will, probably, fall into the same murmuring. Moreover, unconverted men often run to wrong means, to evil shifts in order to escape from difficulties. And you will be sure to do the same, saint as you are, if your mind yields too far to the present pressure. Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea—“Stand still and see the salvation of God.”

But if your heart is troubled. If the water gets to leaking into your ship and the vessel, itself, is filled with the boiling flood—why, you will be plotting this and plotting the other—and before long you will be putting forth your hand unto iniquity and so piercing yourself through with many sorrows! But if the Holy Spirit enables you, in patience, to possess your souls—then, if you suffer, you will not sin and, with all your temptations—you will not suffer, by His Grace, from the regret of having departed from the living God.

Further, you must not give way to these doubts and alarms and fears, for if you do you will be unfit to meet the trouble. In storms landsmen are all in alarm and fear and they are fit for nothing. Just put them under the hatches and keep them down below, or else they will be in the sailors’ way. But the old sailor has seen a storm before and the captain has had many a nor’wester blowing upon him—so he looks around him just as if all were calm and gives his orders to the pilot and the first mate with perfect composure.

And when they have to reef all sail and lie under bare poles, or, worse still, if the mast goes by the board, the captain is very serious, but still quiet and hopeful. He has weathered other tempests and he shall outlive this, also! But you flurried people who are all in a fluster at every piece of evil tidings, what will you do? Why, you will cut your own fingers in seeking to carve your own deliverance! You will push down your house about your head when you meant to have propped it up! You will be quite unable to meet the difficulty if your heart is not “fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

Let me ask you another and very important question. If you give way to fright and fear when you hear of evil tidings, how can you glorify God? Saints can sing God’s high praises in the fires and bless His name on beds of sickness! But you cannot if you fall into distractions. Why, Man, can your murmuring praise God? Your doubts and fears, as if you had none to help you—will these magnify the Most High? Come, I pray you, if you would honor God, be brave!

A certain good man was much troubled under a loss in business. His wife tried to comfort him but failed. But being a very wise woman she gave it up till the morning. In the morning when she came downstairs her face looked so sad that her husband said, “What is the matter with you?” She, still preserving a mournful countenance, said that a dream had troubled her. “What was it, my Dear?” he said, “you ought not to be troubled with dreams.”

“Oh,” she said, “I dreamed that God was dead and it was such reason for trouble that all the angels were weeping in Heaven and all the saints on earth were ready to break their hearts.” Her husband said, “You must not be foolish! You know it was only a dream.” “Oh but,” she said, “to think of God’s being dead!” He replied, “You must not even think of such a thing, for God cannot die! He ever lives to comfort His people.”

Instantly her face brightened up and she said, “I thought I would bring you thus to rebuke yourself, for you have been dreaming that God had forsaken you and now you see how groundless is your sorrow. While God lives, His people are safe.” So, Christian, I think I could give you many reasons why you should praise God and take courage even when evil tidings come! For the sake of blessing others. For your own spiritual health and profit, that you may get fatness out of famine, safety out of danger, gain out of loss—pray that your heart may be fixed in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God!

III. But now somebody will say, “I do not know how I am to keep from these fears. My mind is like that of another man and I am readily disturbed.” Dear Brother, the text tells you, in the third place, that FIXED

NESS OF HEART IS THE TRUE CURE FOR BEING ALARMED AT EVIL TIDINGS. “Fixedness of heart.” The translators somewhat differ as to what this passage means. And some think it means preparedness of heart—“my heart is fixed,” or, “my heart is prepared.” Let it mean both and then we shall have the whole truth, for he whose heart is fixed is prepared!

Now in what respect is a Christian’s heart fixed? I think in many. First, the Christian’s heart is fixed as to duty. He says within himself, “It is my business to walk as Christ walked—it can never be right for me to do contrary to God’s will. I have set the Lord always before me and in integrity of heart will I walk all my way, wherever that way may lead.” Such a man is prepared for anything! Whatever trial comes he is prepared to meet it because his soul is resolved that come gain, come loss, he will not be dishonest to make himself rich.

He will not tell a lie to win a kingdom. He will not give up a principle to save his life. He has not to go, as some of you have, to the next neighbor to say, “What am I to do? What is the best policy?” The Christian has no policy! He does right and leaves consequences to God. I know that if the skies wanted propping with sin, it is no business of mine to prop them and if they could only be sustained by my speaking falsely, they should fall.

The Truth of God is our business! Integrity is our line of duty and results remain with the Most High. In this respect the man who, by Grace, is fixed for the strait and narrow road is prepared, come what may. But, more comfortable than this, the Christian’s heart is fixed as to knowledge and so prepared. There are some things which a Believer knows and is quite fixed about. He knows, for instance, that God sits in the sternsheets of the vessel when it rocks most. He believes that an invisible hand is always on the world’s tiller and that wherever Providence may drift, Jehovah steers it. That re-assuring knowledge prepares him for everything.

“It is my Father’s will,” says he. He looks over the raging waters and he sees the spirit of Jesus treading the billows and he hears a voice which says, “It is I, be not afraid.” He knows, too, that God is always wise and, knowing this, he is prepared for all events. They cannot come amiss, says he. There can be no accidents, no mistakes, nothing can occur which ought not to occur. If I should lose all I have, it is better that I should lose than have, if God so wills—the worst calamity is the wisest and the kindest thing that could occur to me if God ordains it.

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” The Christian does not merely hold this as a theory—he knows it as a matter of fact. Everything has worked for good as of yet. The poisonous drugs that have been mixed in the compound have, nevertheless, worked the cure. The sharp cuts of the lancet have cleansed out the proud flesh and facilitated the healing. Every event as yet has worked out the most divinely blessed results. And so, believing this, that God rules it, that God rules wisely, that God brings good out of evil—the Believer’s heart is fixed and he is well prepared.

Bring me which cup you will, my Father fills them all and I will drink them as He sends them—not merely with resignation—but with sanctified delight! Send me what You will, my God, so long as it comes from You! Never was that a bad portion which came from Your table to any one of Your children. My Father, write what You will concerning Your child—I will not, by Your Grace, seek to pry between the folded leaves—but I will patiently hope and quietly wait as leaf by leaf is unfolded, knowing You are too wise to err and too good to be unkind. Now see what a preparation this is for evil tidings—this having the heart fixed in a knowledge of God!

Further, there is another kind of fixedness, namely, the fixedness of resignation. There is a verse we sing in one of the hymns, that I hardly think at times some of us ought to sing, for it is not at all times true—

*“O You gracious, wise and just,  
In Your hands my life I trust,  
Have I somewhat dearer still?  
I resign it to Your will.”*

It is very easy to say that, but very difficult to carry it out. To take Isaac, our only son, up to the altar and unsheathe the knife at God’s command needs an Abrahamic faith and that kind of faith is not so common as it should be among Christians.

Beloved, when we gave ourselves to Christ we gave Him our person, our estate, our friends and everything—we made a full surrender and the only way to be right when affliction comes is to stand to that surrender—in fact, to renew it every day. It is a good thing every morning to give all up to God and then to live through the day and thank Him for renewing the daily lease. If you think you have mercies on a fifty years’ lease you will become discontented if turned out of the tenancy. But if you feel you are only, as it were, a daily tenant, you will feel grateful that the great Landlord has given you a new lease!

The eyes of your body—are they given forever? Their light may never know tomorrow’s sun. Those lips which you today give to God’s service may soon chill in silence. So is it with all you have. Then resign all to God, for if you give it all up to Him every day, it will not be hard to give it up when He takes it away at last. If you have resigned it a thousand times before, it will only be a repetition of what you have rehearsed to yourself before and, therefore, are well taught in. Stand to your resignation! Be fixed about that and you will be prepared for the most evil tidings.

Better still, let me remind you of one form of fixedness which will make you outride every storm, namely, fixedness as to eternal things. “I cannot lose,” the Christian may say—“I cannot lose my best things.” When a carrier has many parcels to carry, if he has gold and silver or precious stones, he is sure to put them near himself. Perhaps he has some common goods and these he ties on behind—some thief, it is possible, steals from the cart some of the common goods which were outside. “Oh, well,” says the man when he gets home, “I am sorry to lose anything, but my precious things are all right. I have them all safe. I thank God the thief could not run away with them.”

Now our earthly goods, and even our dearest friends, are only the common mercies of God—but our Savior, our God, our eternal interest in the Covenant, our Heaven which we are soon to inherit—these are kept where they cannot be lost! A friend of mine once went up to the bank with a thousand pounds in his pocket. I do not think he was very wise, for after putting that large sum in his pocket, he put his handkerchief over it and

somewhere or other down in the Borough, or over London Bridge, a thief stole his handkerchief!

He said to me, “I never thought at all about that! I was so full of joy at finding that the money was not gone.” The anecdote is instructive, for our earthly comforts compared with our eternal interests are but as the handkerchief compared to the thousand pounds—no—they do not bear so high a relation! If adversity should come and take everything else away, yet, Christian, your heart is still fixed because you have a grasp of eternal things. And neither life nor death, nor time, nor eternity can make you let go of your hold of the Glory which is to be revealed in you! Thus you are prepared, come what may.

I will only add one other thought on this point. I believe that holy gratitude is one blessed way of fixing the soul on God and preparing it for trouble. You have a friend who gave you a very hard word the other day. You felt very grieved, but after a few minutes you said, “There, now, if he were to kick me, I should always love him for the great kindness that he did to me years ago when I was in great straits.” Now, when I think of what our God has done for us, how He saved us from going down into the pit and found a ransom in His own dear Son! When we remember how He has plucked us out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—let Him do to me what seems good to Him!

The Lord gave us Christ! Then let Him take away what He will—we cannot think harshly of Him—after such a proof of love we are bound to Him by such ties of gratitude that let Him take away one mercy after the other till there is hardly one left, we will yet bless His name. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” Let every saint of God feel himself so fixed and bound by ties of gratitude that he is prepared, whatever may come, still to bless his God!

IV. The last point is this—THE GREAT INSTRUMENT OF FIXEDNESS OF HEART IS FAITH IN GOD. “His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” You see that we have come here by progressive steps. Evil tidings may come to an heir of Heaven—he ought not to be afraid of them. The way to be prepared for them is to have your heart fixed and prepared. And the method of having the heart fixed is confident trustfulness in the Lord.

The Christian is not prepared for trial by trusting in his fellow men, or by relying upon his own wisdom and experience. We lean on a better prop than an arm of flesh! The Christian relies only upon his God. Every attribute engages this confidence. The heir of Heaven rests in the love of God. “Oh,” says he, “my Father loves me too well to suffer any evil thing to damage me. I know by that very Spirit which He has given, by which I cry, ‘Abba, Father’—I know the tenderness of His heart forbids that I should ever perish, or that anything should happen to me which shall do me serious damage.”

When there was a fire many years ago in the little town of Delft, in Holland, it occurred in a house upon the top of which a stork’s nest had been built. Now the storks are very affectionate to their young and it was observed that as the flames went up, the storks tried first of all to carry off their young, but when that could not be done, both parents kept flapping their nests with their wings, as though to cool the young ones. And when the flames drew nearer, both parents set themselves down over the top of the nest and there died with their young ones.

Can it be possible that our God could have less affection for His own children than these poor birds had for the offspring of their nest? Impossible! He will cover us with His feathers and under His wings will we trust! His Truth shall be our shield and buckler. Come famine, come pestilence, come disease, come death, come judgment—

*“He that has loved us bears us through,  
And makes us more than conquerors, too.”*

The Believer, thus dependent upon God’s love, is also trusting in God’s power. He knows that none ever did resist the Lord with success. That mighty arm breaks the enemy in pieces! When he goes forth to war, it is as when the potter breaks earthen vessels with a rod of iron. The Christian feels that the Omnipotence of God is more to be trusted than the power of the devil is to be dreaded.

“More is He that is for us than all they that are against us.” The Christian perceives the enemy round about, but his eyes have been touched with heavenly ointment and he can also see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire! And therefore he trusts in the power of his God and his soul is not disturbed. He relies also, as we have said, upon the wisdom of God, for indeed, every attribute of the Most High becomes a subject of the Believer’s joy. I am afraid, dear Friends, we forget our God too often. I am sure that at the bottom we do not believe Him to be wise, or else we do not believe Him to be gracious. For if we did know and feel and realize that He is God and just such a God as Scripture says He is, we should lean back upon Him and leave trouble, adversity, loss and crosses with Him—casting all our care on Him because He cares for us.

Get, I pray you, to be assured of His sympathy with you. Do not think He is indifferent to the griefs that vex you. You are in the furnace, but He sits at the mouth of it watching you as the dross melts in the flame. God is never away from any of His children, but He is nearest to those who are the most sad and sick and troubled. If there is one sheep in the fold that is more watched over than the rest, it is the weakest sheep. “He carries the lambs in His bosom and gently leads those that are with young.” You cannot imagine how dear you are to His heart! And He is so determined to bring you safely home that He has sworn it with an oath. By two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, He has given you strong consolation.

Will you reject the consolation when He brings it? Is not the Comforter Himself able to comfort you? Christ has gone to Heaven that you might have that precious gift of the Comforter within you! Why will you grieve the Holy Spirit of God and bring this trouble upon your own spirit by these anxieties, these doubts, and fears? “Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Go with joy and draw water out of the well of salvation and praise Him all the days of your life.

When Dr. Payson was getting near his end he reminded his friends that God is enough for His people. He said, “In years gone by I often dreaded the taking away of certain earthly comforts. But when they have been withdrawn, I have had so much more of the Grace and Presence of God that I have had to be thankful for the apparent loss, for it was a real

gain. And now,” he said, “that I am a cripple and confined to my house, I am far happier than I ever expected to be, and am as happy as a man well could be out of Heaven.”

We can sing that verse together—  
*“And if our dearest comforts fall  
Before His Sovereign will,  
He never takes away our all.  
Himself He gives us still.”*

Since you have your God left, Christian, let the text be true of you, “He is not afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” I have not time to say anything about the contrast to all this, but it is a contrast which would bear very hard upon those of you who have not looked to Jesus Christ. You have need to be afraid of everything. The stones of the earth are not in league with you, nor are the beasts of the earth at peace with you. There is no Providence working your good. There is no special eye upon your benefit. You are orphan children.

The stars in Heaven fought against Sisera, remember, and they fight against you. The sweet influence of the Pleiades you cannot know, and heavenly blessings you can claim no share. Oh, that you could hide yourself beneath the wings of God! Do you desire it? Then remember who it was that said, “How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings.”

Fly to the Savior! There are His wounds. They will afford you shelter. He died to save the lost! For the rebellious He has obtained mercies. Give Him your soul to save! Trust Him to work a good work in you and for you and you shall never die, but, with holy joy and confidence shall live in the light of His Countenance forevermore! The Lord bless this sermon to the staying of His people’s hearts upon Himself and His shall be the praise. Amen.

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FROM THE DUNGHILL TO THE THRONE

NO. 658

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 5, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the dunghill, that He may  
set him with princes, even with the princes of His people.” Psalm 113:7, 8.**

THE greatness and majesty of the Most High God are utterly inconceivable. The most masterly minds, when in the most spiritual state, have felt it impossible for the utmost stretch of their imagination to reach to the grandeur of God. Our loftiest conceptions of the universe probably fall very far short of what it really is—although the researches of astronomy have revealed facts surpassing all the powers of the human mind in the attempt to grasp them. Thought, reason, understanding, and even imagination are bewildered in the vast and illimitable fields of space amidst the marvels of God’s handiwork.

Yet all the wonders which the human eye has seen, or mortal spirit guessed at, are but parts of His ways. We have heard no more than one stanza of creation’s never-ending Psalm. We have viewed but one stone in the vast mosaic of the Maker’s works. An infusorial atom of life in a drop of water may know as much of the great sea as we do of the universe as a whole. An ant creeping over a sand heap by the seaside must not boast of having counted the grains which bound the ocean—nor must the most learned mortal dream that he has a full idea of the vast creation of God!

Above all this, however, is the fact that all these wondrous works bear no more proportion to the unseen, all-powerful God, than one line written by the pen of Milton would bear to His masterly mind. When God has made all that He ordains to create and when we have seen all that He has made, yet there remains in Himself infinite possibilities of creation. The potter is far greater than the vessel which he fashions and the Lord is infinitely greater than all His works. He fills all things, but all things cannot fill Him. He contains immensity! He grasps eternity! But neither immensity nor eternity can encompass Him—

*“Great God, how infinite You are!  
What worthless worms are we!”*

Very fittingly does the Psalmist sing of Him as God humbling Himself to behold the things which are in Heaven. Those majestic beings—cherubim and seraphim—who flash with wings of fire to obey the behests of the Eternal are not to be observed of Him unless, speaking after the manner of men, in condescension He stoops Himself to view them. We sing of the Heaven, even the Heaven of heavens, as the Lord’s and speak of those glorious places as being His peculiar abode, and so they are. And yet the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him and celestial spirits are as nothing when compared with Him.

Consider, then, the condescension of the Lord in visiting the sons of men! What a stoop is here, my Brethren! From the Throne of the Infinite to the clay tenements of man! Surely in a moment you will perceive that

all gradations of rank among our race of worms must be less than nothing and even contemptible with Him! He does not consort with kings when He descends to earth, for what is their mimic pomp to Him? He does not seek out for Himself regal society as being more worthy of His dignity than association with poverty, for what is the child’s play of courtly grandeur to Him? A king! What is he but a crowned worm? A king! What is he but dust and ashes raised a very little higher on the ash heap than the rest of the dust?

The Lord, therefore, makes but small account of the honor which comes from man whose breath is in His nostrils—  
*“With scorn Divine,  
He turns His eyes  
From towers of haughty kings.”*

When His awful chariot rolls downward from the skies He makes men mark the fact of His condescension by visiting men of low estate. He would have to stoop to a palace—it is no more if He stoops to a dunghill. When He is engaged on Mercy’s errands, having bowed so low as to enter a cabinet-council chamber, it is scarcely a step further to the haunt of poverty and the den of vice. Courage, you most humble of the sons of men—He who reigns in Heaven despises none. “He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the dunghill.”

This has frequently occurred in Providence. God in His arrangements singularly alters the position of men. History is not without many instances in which the uppermost have become lowest and the lowest have been highest. Verily, “There are first that shall be last and there are last that shall be first.” Solomon said, “I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking in the dust.” And the same thing has been seen even in these modern times, when kings have fled their thrones and men who were prowling about in poverty have mounted to imperial power.

God in Providence often laughs at pedigree and ancestry and stains the honor and dignity of everything in which human nature boasts itself. From the kennel to the palace is an easy ascent when Heaven favors. It is not upon Providence that I intend to dilate this morning. My text has a special bearing upon God’s acts of Grace. Here it is above all others that we see the condescending sovereignty of His dealings. He takes the base things of the world and the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.

He selects for Himself those whom men would have repudiated with scorn—He covers His tabernacle of witness with badgers’ skins, chooses unhewn stones to be the materials for His altar, a bush for a place of blazing manifestation and a shepherd boy to be the man after His own heart. Those persons and things which are despised among men are often highly esteemed in the sight of God. In considering the text this morning, let us notice the objects of God’s choice. First, where some of them are. Secondly, how He takes them from their degraded state. Thirdly, how He lifts them up. And fourthly, where He puts them.

It will be the history of a child of God—from the dunghill to the throne! Novelists are plastering our walls with sensational titles. Here is one which might even satisfy them in their ambition to delight the morbid cravings of this age. “From the dunghill to the throne,” is a subject which ought to win your attention, and if it does not, the fault must surely lie with me—in it there will always be a blessed novelty of interest. And yet we thank God that it is a correct description of the upward experience of all the Lord’s people! He finds tens of thousands in the dunghill-state and bears them up by the arms of His mercy till He makes them to sit among the princes of His people!

I. We will begin where God began with us. WHERE GOD’S CHOSEN ONES ARE WHEN HE MEETS WITH THEM. The expression used in the text implies, in the first place, that many of them are in the lowest scale socially. Sovereign Grace has a people everywhere—in all ranks and conditions of men. Were we taken up to Heaven and did the heavenly spirits wear any token of their rank on earth, we should, on returning, say, “Here and there I saw a king. I marked a few princes of the blood and a handful of peers of the realm. I observed a little company of the prudent and a slender band of the rich and famous. But I saw a great company of the poor and the unknown, who were rich in faith and known unto the Lord.”

The Lord excludes no man from His election on account of his rank or condition. We shall not err if we say—  
*“While Grace is given to the prince,  
The poor receive their share.  
To perish in despair.” No mortal has a just pretense*

Yet how true it is that many of those whom God has chosen are found not simply among the workers, but among the poorest ranks of the sons of toil! There are some whose daily toil can scarcely find them bread enough to keep body and soul together, and yet they have fed daintily upon the Bread of Heaven. Many are clad in garments of the meanest kind, patched and mended everywhere, and yet they are as gloriously arrayed in the sight of God and the holy angels as the brightest of the saints! “Yet, I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Some of the sweetest biographies of Christians have been the lives of the lowly culled from the annals of the poor. Who has not read, “The Young Cottager,” and “The Dairyman’s Daughter”? Who has not found the greatest pleasure in visiting those bed-ridden ones who lie in the alms’ room—those saints of God who owe to charity their daily food because sickness has deprived them of the means of earning their bread? My poor Hearer, you may this morning, while sitting in that pew, feel as if you were scarcely respectable enough to be in a place of worship, but I pray you let not your poverty hinder your receiving the Gospel, whose peculiar glory it is that it is preached to the poor!

You may have nothing at all in this world—not a foot of ground which you can call your own. You may have been fighting against adversity—a deadly struggle—year after year, and yet you may still be as poor as poverty itself. I will neither commend nor upbraid your poverty, for there is nothing necessarily good or bad morally in any state of life. But I beg that you will not let your circumstances discourage you in the matter of your spiritual interest before God. Come as a beggar if you are a beggar. Come in rags if you have no other covering. “He that has no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!”

The expression in the text does not refer merely to social grades. I have no doubt it has a more spiritual meaning. The dunghill is a place where men throw their worthless things. When you have quite done with an article and cannot put it to any further use, you throw it away. It has been turned to two or three accounts since it was first employed for its original

intention and now it is in the way and can no longer be harbored. It is of no use to be sold even as old metal and therefore you throw it on the dunghill that it may be taken away with the rubbish. How often have God’s own chosen people felt themselves to be mere refuse and sweepings, good for nothing but to be cast away?

You, dear Friends, are in a like case, for you have discovered your own utter worthlessness. Looking upon yourself in the light which you have received from Heaven, your fancied value has all departed. You were very important once in your own esteem, but you now perceive that your loss, so far from affecting Heaven and earth, would be of no more consequence to the world at large than the throwing of a rotten fruit upon the dunghill, or the falling of a sere leaf from one forest tree amidst a myriad.

In your own estimation there is in you a lack of adaptation for any useful purpose. You are of no more use than salt which has lost its savor. You cannot glorify God as you could wish. You do not wish as much as you should. You can neither pray with the earnestness you desire, nor praise with the gratitude you wish to feel. Looking back upon your past life you are heartily ashamed. In a corner you mourn out, “Lord, what a worthless piece of lumber I have been in this world! What a cumberer of the ground! What an unprofitable servant!”

You have been useful to your family, or to your country and once you thought this enough—but now you measure yourself as in the light of God—and inasmuch as you have never glorified Him who made you and have brought no honor to Him who is your kind and gracious Preserver, you feel yourself to be worthless. So worthless that if the Lord should throw you on the dunghill and say, “Put him away! He is as worthless as dross and dung!” He would only treat you as you richly deserve.

My dear Friend, this estimate of yourself, though it brings you much unhappiness, is a very healthy sign. When we think little of ourselves, God thinks much of us. “God resists the proud, but gives Grace unto the humble.” He will not break you, O you bruised reed! He will not quench you, O you smoking flax! But though you are only fit to be cast on the dunghill, His mercy will tenderly consider you and exalt you among the princes of His people!

Again, the dunghill is a place of contempt. Contempt sometimes sneeringly says of its victim, “He is such a person that I would not pick him up if I saw him on a dunghill.” The sneer of the world condemns some persons thus—“Oh, they are good for nothing. A dunghill is too good for them.” Possibly, my Hearer, you may be placed in a family where you are much despised. You may not have the ability and sharpness of others of the household, and therefore you are much looked down upon and are regarded as a poor simpleton, not worth noticing. You have not succeeded in life as others have done and consequently you are viewed with much contempt by those who have prospered much and speedily.

You may even feel, this morning, as if you merited the contempt poured upon you. You have been saying, “Ah, you despise me, but if you knew me as I know myself, you would despise me more! You think nothing of me and I am less than nothing. You call me an ill name, but could you see the deceitfulness of my base heart, you would understand that the name might be worn in truth though given in jest.”

Well, despised one, let me remind you that the Lord has often looked upon those whom man has despised. And though your own parents may have taken no pleasure in you and society may sneer at you and you may, yourself, now feel as if the sneer were well deserved, yet take confidence and be of good heart for God visits dunghills when He does not visit palaces and He will lift up the humble and meek from the dust where they pine and languish! The next remark may, perhaps, afford more comfort— the dunghill is like a place for filthy and offensive things. We say of a foul and unsavory thing, “It is too bad to be borne in the house, let it be swept away. Put it away with the filth—cover it up.”

When a matter becomes noisome, putrid, offensive, we want it to be removed at once. Ah, sad that we should have to say this of any of our fellow creatures, but we must say it. There are some whose sins are terribly foul. Their iniquities are so vile that they are an offense in the eyes and ears of all decent men—and the Holy God looks upon their actions with wrath and detestation. Some sinners have become so infamous in character that they are an injury to all associated with them! They cannot enter into any company without spreading the contagion of their sin. Their example is so bad that it is enough to poison the parish where they live. They are only fit to be put as so much rottenness, foulness, and putridity, on the dunghill where immorality rots out its hour of abomination.

But, oh, the love of my Master! He has often stooped to rescue the abandoned from the dunghill. In Heaven I see those who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb who once were harlots like Rahab, adulterers like David, and idolaters like Manasseh! Before the Throne of God there stand today, among the peers of God, those who, in their days of unregeneracy were thieves and drunkards and blasphemers! Heaven’s courts are trod by many who once were the chief of sinners, but who now are brightest among the saints. I pray you, Beloved, never think that the Gospel of Christ saved great offenders in years gone by, but that now it is only for the upright and moral!

The moral are freely invited to Christ, which we never forget to testify, but the immoral are bid, too. The Lord came to our earth as a Physician. And He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came not to heal those who are already sound in health, but the sick. O my Hearer, if you are so sick with sin that your whole head is sick and your whole heart faint and from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet there is no soundness in you—nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores—yet still the love of my Master will stoop to you!

If you have added lust to theft and even murder to lust! If you are redhanded with infamous iniquity, yet the sacred crimson bath which was filled from the heart of Jesus can wash away “all manner of sin and blasphemy.” Whoever believes in Him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. Refined minds thought just now that I was using a very ugly expression when I spoke of rescuing rottenness from the dunghill, but the expression is all too clean when compared with sin—for all the filth and loathsomeness that ever offended eye and nostril are sweetness itself compared with sin!

The foulest and most detestable thing in the whole universe is sin. It is this which keeps the fire of Hell burning as God’s great sanitary necessity. There cannot but be a constant Tophet where there is such constant sin.

We read that in certain French towns they kindled great public fires because of the cholera. The cholera? What is it compared with sin? Well may God cause the fiery flames of eternal torment to go up forever and ever, for it is only by such terrific punishment that the plague of sin can be at all restrained within bounds. Sin is a horrible evil, a deadly poison!

And yet, Sinner, though you are as full of it as an egg is full of meat and as reeking with it as the foulest piece of noxious matter can be reeking with foul smell—yet the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus can lift you from this utmost degradation and make you shine as a star in His kingdom at the last!

Once more, the dunghill may be spiritually considered as the place of condemnation. You look at a certain article of food, for instance, and the economical housewife does not wish to waste anything. Well, if it may not serve for food, may it not be useful for something else? At last, when she sees that it is of no service, the sentence of condemnation is, “Let it be cast on the dunghill.” Nebuchadnezzar, in his memorable proclamation concerning the Lord Jehovah, said that whoever should speak a word against Him should be cut in pieces and his house should be made a dunghill.

There is a connection, then, between the dunghill and condemnation. Now there may be in this audience, this morning, a man who feels himself to be under sentence of condemnation. You have so often had pricks of conscience—so frequently have been taught better—and yet you have sinned against light and knowledge, and now you consider yourself to have sinned beyond the reach of mercy. My voice, this morning, very likely grates on your ears. Though it is meant to convey to you the most gladsome tidings that ever silver trumpet rung out to bankrupt sinner on the day of Jubilee, yet it sounds to you like the voice which proclaims your doom.

Well, poor Sinner, if you are, in yourself, condemned and a hoarse voice has said, “To the dunghill with him! To the flames of Hell with him!” yet I come to you in Jehovah’s name and bid you hear this Word of God this morning—“He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes.” What do you say to this? What if God should forgive you this morning? What if He should make you His child? What if He should give you a crown of life that fades not away? “Oh,” you say, “if He would, I would love and bless Him.” Sinner, He will do it if you can now believe in the Lord Jesus whose blood cleanses us from all sin!

By the death of Jesus I beseech you trust in the atoning sacrifice of Calvary and you shall live to praise His redeeming love. I must not, however, leave out a thought which just occurred to me. A thing which lies upon the dunghill is in contact with disgusting associates. And, therefore, the text may represent those who have up to now lived in the midst of evil associations. When these doors are opened, there often come in here, out of curiosity, persons who are not regular attendants at places of worship—I must say the most hopeful class that I ever address—for some of you who have heard my voice and the voices of other ministers so long are almost hopeless!

We might as well give you up for we have pleaded with you so frequently and put the Truth of God before you so constantly, that surely if it ever was to have been blessed to you it would have been blessed already! But those to whom the Gospel is a new thing occasionally drop in and some of these come from the very worst society, fresh from the theater, the gin palace and worse places still—the name of Jesus scarcely known except as it may be used in blasphemy! And the person never thought of God Most High except as He is invoked in a curse.

Friend, we are glad that you are here! You have been on the dunghill. You are on the dunghill now! You have been living with publicans and harlots. You have kept bad company. You have not been nurtured among the choice and the elite of mankind! On the contrary, you have been among the pots and dwelt in the hedges. Now it is such as you are that Jesus Christ bids us gather in. “Go out quickly into the lanes and into the hedges and as many as you find bid to the supper.” And they brought in the blind and the halt and the lame and they took their seats and feasted where others who were first invited refused to come!

I call to you, then, if such there are within my hearing—to you who do not often darken the doors of God’s sanctuary—to you who live among the profane and the debauched—turn to Jesus Christ, I pray you! May the eternal Spirit turn you this day and may you be found among the chosen of God! Alas, and woe is me that I should have to say it, some of you, my Hearers, who have been moral and excellent and have listened to the Word these years, will, I solemnly fear, perish in your sins! For verily, verily, I say unto you, publicans and harlots will enter into the kingdom of Heaven before some of you who hear the Word but do it not! And listen to it but feel not its power! And know the joyful sound but do not receive it in your hearts!

Thus much, then, as to where some of God’s people are found. Let me say that in a certain sense this is where they all are—all on the dunghill of Adam’s Fall—all on the dunghill of self-conceit, self-righteousness and depravity and sin and corruption! But Sovereign Mercy comes to them just as they lie there rotting in heaps of ruin and rescues them by effectual Grace.

II. In the second place, we desire to describe HOW THE LORD RAISES THEM FROM IT. He lifts the needy out of the dunghill. It is a dead lift and none but an eternal arm could do it. It is a feat of Omnipotence to lift a sinner out of his natural degradation—it is all done by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, filled with the energy of God. The operation is somewhat on this wise. When the Lord begins to deal with the needy sinner, the first lift He gives him raises his desires. The man is not satisfied to be where he was, and what he was. That dunghill he had not perceived to be so foul as it really is. And the first sign of spiritual life is horror at his lost condition and an anxious desire to escape from it.

Dear Hearer, have you advanced so far as this? Do you feel that all is wrong with you? And do you desire to be saved from your present state? So long as you can say, “It is well with me,” and boast that you are no worse than others, I have no hope for you. God does not lift those up who are lifted up already! But when you begin to feel that your present state is one of degradation and ruin and that you desire to escape from it, then the Lord has put the lever under you! He has begun to raise you up!

The next sign generally is that to such a man sin loses all sweetness. When the Lord begins to work with you, even before you find Christ to the joy of your soul, you will find the joy of sin to have departed. A quickened soul that feels the weight of sin cannot find pleasure in it. Although without faith in Jesus, the evil of sin cannot clearly and evangelically be

perceived, yet the conscience of an awakened sinner, perceiving the terribly defiling character of some sins, compels him to give them up.

The alehouse is abandoned. The scorner’s seat is given up. The lusts of the flesh are forsaken—and though this does not lift the sinner from the dunghill, yet it is a sign that the Lord has begun His work of Grace. When sin grows bitter, mercy grows sweet. O my Friend, may the Lord wean you from the world’s sweet poisons and bring you to the true pleasures which are hidden in Christ Jesus! It is another blessed sign that the man is being lifted from the dunghill when he begins to feel that his own selfrighteousness is no assistance to him—when, having prayed, he looks upon his prayers with repentance—and having gone to God’s House, rests not in the outward form.

It is well when a man is cut off entirely from all confidence in himself. He may be on the dunghill still, but I am sure he will not be there long, for when you and yourself have quarreled, God and yourself begin to be at peace. When you can see through that cobweb righteousness of yours, which once seemed to be such a fair silken garment—when you can hate that counterfeit coin which once seemed to glitter and to chink like the true gold—when you are plunged in the ditch and your own clothes abhor you, it is not long before you shall be saved with an everlasting salvation!

Now comes the true lift from off the dunghill. That poor, guilty, lost, worthless one hears of Jesus Christ, that He came into the world to save sinners—that poor soul looks to Him with a look which means, “Lord, You are my last resort! If You do not save me, I will perish. And You must save me altogether, for I cannot help You. I cannot give a thread with which to finish Your perfect righteousness. If it is unfinished, I cannot contribute one farthing to make up my own ransom—if You have not completely ransomed me, then Your redemption is of no service to me. Lord, I am a drowning, sinking man, I grasp You as I sink! O save me for Your mercy’s

sake!”— *“All my help on You is stayed.  
All my trust from You I bring.  
Cover my defenseless head  
With the shadow of Your wing.”*

When a soul gets there, then it is off the dunghill! The moment a sinner thus trusts Jesus Christ, his sins cease to be! God has drawn His pen through them all. They are gone. He is not guilty in the sight of God any longer—he stands acquitted through the Atonement and justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is a saved man! He may rise from his sackcloth and ashes, and walking at large, may sing of the bloodbought mercy which has set him completely free. Thus by the gift of the only-begotten Son, brought personally to the heart, the Lord raises His elect ones from their ruined state. He makes them see it to be a dunghill— makes them feel that they cannot get off of it themselves—points them to Christ—leads them to trust His precious blood and so they are delivered!

III. The third point is, HOW HE RAISES THEM UP. It is a blessed thing to be saved from degradation, but praise be to Jehovah, He does not stop there! The Lord does nothing by halves. Oh, the lengths and breadths of love! When He has come right down to where we are it is only half His journey—it remains for Him to bear us right up to where He is. Oh, it is a blessed thing to be taken off the dunghill, even if our lot were that of hired servants in our father’s house—but this does not satisfy the infinite heart of Jehovah—He will lift His people up above all commonplace joys—he will take them right up, up, up as on eagles’ wings till He sets them in the place of princes and makes them to reign with Him!

Now let us have a few minutes’ consideration of how our blessed Lord lifts His people up from the common level of humanity to make them rank with princes. In the first place, they are lifted up by complete Justification. Every Christian here this morning, whatever may have been his past life, is at this instant perfect in the sight of God through Jesus Christ. The spotless righteousness of Christ is imputed to that sinner believing in Him, so that he stands, this morning, “accepted in the Beloved.”

Now Beloved, weigh this—turn it over and meditate upon it. Poor, needy, but believing Sinner, you are as accepted before God at this present time through Christ Jesus as if you had never sinned—as if you had done and performed every work of His most righteous Law without the slightest failure! Is not this sitting among princes? Complete Justification furnishes the Believer with a throne as safe as it is lofty—as happy as it is glorious. Ah, you scions of imperial houses, some of you know nothing of this! This is a note which many an emperor could never sing, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?”

Speak of sitting in pavilions of pleasure, or on divans of state with nobles, princes, kings, Caesars—why the figure flags—it falls short of the mark, for the state of the soul completely justified outshines all this as the sun outshines yon glimmering candle! Take the next step. The children of God who have been taken from the dunghill, many of them, enjoy full assurance of faith. They are certain that they are saved. They can say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” As to whether they are children of God or not, they have no question.

The Infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are born of God. Christ is their elder Brother, God is their Father and they breathe the filial spirit by which they cry, “Abba, Father!” They know their own security. They are convinced that neither “things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.” I ask every one of understanding heart whether this is not sitting among princes?

Beloved, I would not give a farthing for a prince’s throne, but I would give all I had a thousand times told, if I might always enjoy full assurance of faith! The full assurance of faith is a better joy than Shushan’s palace of lilies, or Solomon’s house of the forest of Lebanon could ever yield. A sense of Divine loving-kindness is better than life itself—it is a young Heaven maturing below to be fully developed above. To know that my Beloved is mine and that I am His and that He loved me and gave Himself for me—this is far better than to be heir-apparent to a number of empires!

We go further. The children of God favored by Divine Grace are permitted to have interviews with Jesus Christ! Like Enoch, we walk with God. Just as a child walks with his father, putting his hand into his father’s hand, looking up with loving eyes, so the chosen people walk with their Father God most lovingly, confidingly, familiarly, talking to Him, telling Him their griefs and hearing from His gracious mouth the secrets of

His love. They are a happy people, for they have communion with Jesus of a more intimate and tender sort than even angels know.

We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones! We are married unto Him! He has betrothed us unto Himself in faithfulness and in righteousness. We are dearer to Himself than His own flesh and blood— that He gave to die—and none of us shall ever perish! Neither shall any take us out of His hand. Now, is not this sitting among princes? Princes? Princes? We look down upon your pomp from the eminence on which Grace has placed us! Wear your crowns! Put on your purple! Deck yourselves in all your regal pomp! But when our souls can sit with Jesus and reign as kings and priests with Him, your splendors are not worth a thought!

Communion with Jesus is a richer gem than ever glittered in any imperial diadem. Union with the Lord is a coronet of beauty outshining all the crowns of earth. Nor is this all—the elect of God, in addition to receiving complete justification, full assurance and communion with Christ—are favored with the Holy Spirit’s sanctification. God the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian. However humble he may be, he is a walking temple in which resides Deity. God the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we in Him. And that Spirit sanctifies the daily actions of the Christian, so that he does everything as unto God.

If he lives, it is to Christ, and if he dies, it is gain. O Beloved, it is, indeed, to sit among princes when you feel the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. O my God, if I might always feel Your Spirit overcoming my corruption and constraining my soul to holiness, I would not so much as think of a prince in comparison with my own joy! O my dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, I am sure you can bear witness that when you fall into sin at any time, it brings you very low. You smell that vile dunghill once again and are ready to die under its fearful noisomeness! But when the Holy Spirit enables you to overcome sin and to live as Christ lived, you feel that you have a royal standing and a more than imperial privilege in being sanctified in Christ Jesus!

Moreover, many saints receive, in addition to sanctification, the blessing of usefulness. And, mark the word, every useful man is of princely rank. I am not exaggerating now, but speaking the sober truth. He is the true prince among men who blesses his fellows. To be able to drop pearls from your lips might make you a prince in a fairy tale, but when those lips bless the souls of men by leading them to Jesus—this is to be a prince in very deed! To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to reclaim the fallen, to teach the ignorant, to cheer the desponding, to inspire the wavering and to conduct saints up to God’s right hand—my Brethren—this is to wear a luster which stars and ribbons, orders and distinctions never could confer!

This is the privilege of each one of you, according as the Spirit of God has given you the measure of faith. You, who once did mischief, now subserve the interest of virtue. You, who rendered up your members servants unto unrighteousness, now make those same members servants of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. No courts of sovereigns can bestow such true honors as dwell in holiness, charity and zeal. And once more, God lifts His people up in another sense—while He gives them sanctification and usefulness, He also anoints them with joy. Oh, the joy of being a Christian!

I know the world’s idea is that we are a miserable people. If you read the pages of history, the writers speak of the gay cavaliers as being men of high spirit and overflowing joy—but the poor Puritans—what a wretched set they were! They blasphemed Christmas day, abhorred games and sports, and going about the world looking so terribly miserable that it were a pity they should go to Hell, for they had enough of torment here!

Now this talk is all untrue! Or at best is a gross caricature! Hypocrites, then as now, did wear a long face and a rueful countenance. But there were to be found among the Puritans hosts of men whose holy mirth and joy were not to be equaled. No, not to be dreamed of, or understood by those poor grinning fools who fluttered round the heartless rake whose hypocrisies had lifted him to the English throne. The cavaliers’ mirth was the crackling of thorns under a pot, but a deep and unquenchable joy dwelt in the breasts of those men—

*“Who trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong, Who sat in the high places and slew the saints of God.”*

Oh, far above the laughter of the gallants of the court was the mighty and deep joy of those who rode from the victorious field singing unto the Lord who had made them triumph gloriously!

They called them “Ironsides,” and such they were, but they had hearts of steel, which while they flinched not in the day of danger, forgot not to flash with joy even as steel glitters in the shining of the sun. Believe me, however, whatever they were, we who trust in Jesus are the happiest of people—not constitutionally, for some of us have great depression of spirits. Not always circumstantially, for some of us are much tried and are brought to the utter depths of poverty—but inwardly, truly,

 really—our heart’s joy, believe us, is not to be excelled. I would not stand here to lie for twice the Indies, but I will speak the truth—if I had to die like a dog tomorrow I would not change places with any man beneath the courts of Heaven for joy and peace of mind!

To be a Christian, and know it, to drink deep of that cup, to know your election, to understand your calling—I assure you yields more peace and bliss in ten minutes than will be found in one hundred years in all the courts of sin, though wantonness should run riot and pleasure should

know no license— *“Solid joy and lasting pleasure  
None but Zion’s children know.”*

So when I read the text that He sets us among princes, I think little of the figure. It halts, it limps—for the Lord puts us far above all earthly princes! And were it not for the next sentence I would even say that the figure broke down altogether. But that clause makes it right—“even the princes of His people”—this puts soul and force—these are princes of another blood! These are peers of another realm and among such God sets His people!

IV. To conclude, we have to notice in the last place, WHERE IT IS THAT OUR LORD SETS HIS PEOPLE. “Among princes,” we are told. We have already dwelt upon the same thought, but we will examine another side of it. “Among princes,” is the place of select society. They do not admit everybody into that charmed circle. Among an aristocracy the poor plebeian must not venture. The blue blood runs in rather a narrow channel and it cannot be expected that the common crimson should be allowed to invigorate the languid current.

The true Christian lives in very select society. Listen! “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Speak of select society—there is none like this! We are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. “We are not come unto Mount Sinai, but we are come unto the blood of sprinkling and unto the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven.” This is select society.

Next they have courtly audience—the prince may be expected to have admittance to royalty when common people like ourselves must stand afar off. Now the child of God has free access to the royalty of Heaven. Our courtly privileges are of the highest order. Listen! “For through Him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.” “Let us come boldly,” says the Apostle, “to the Throne of the heavenly Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need.” We have courtly audience and peculiarly select society.

Next to this it is supposed that among princes there is abundant wealth, but what is the wealth of princes compared with the riches of Believers? For “all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Among princes, again, there dwells peculiar power. A prince has influence. He wields a scepter in his own domain—and, “He has made us kings and priests unto God and we shall reign forever and ever.”

We are not kings of England, Scotland and Ireland, and yet we have a triple dominion! We reign over spirit, soul and body! We reign over the united kingdom of time and eternity! We reign in this world and we shall reign in the world that is yet to come—for we shall reign forever and ever! Princes, again, have special honor. Everyone in the crowd desires to gaze upon a prince and would be delighted to do him service. Let him have the first position in the empire—he is a prince of the blood and is to be had in esteem and respect.

Beloved, hear His Word—“He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” so that we share the honor of Christ as we share His Cross. Paul was taken from the dunghill of persecution, but he is not second to any in Glory! And you, though you may have been the chief of sinners, shall fare none the worse when He comes in His kingdom! But as He owned you on earth and redeemed you with His precious blood, so will He own you in the future state and make you sit with Him and reign among princes, world without end. May the Lord bless these words for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalm 113.*  
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Sermon #1902 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HAPPY DUTY OF DAILY PRAISE

NO. 1902

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever.” Psalm 114:1, 2.**

IF I were to put to you the question, “Do you pray?” the answer would be very quickly given by every Christian person, “Of course I do.” Suppose I then added, “And do you pray every day?” the prompt reply would be, “Yes, many times in the day. I could not live without prayer.” This is no more than I expect and I will not ask the question. But let me change the enquiry and ask, “Do you bless God every day? Is praise as certain and constant a practice with you as prayer?” I am not sure that the answer would be quite so certain, so general, or so prompt. You would have to stop a little while before you gave the reply and, I fear in some cases, when the reply did come, it would be, “I am afraid I have been negligent in praise.” Well, then, dear Friend, have you not been wrong? Should we omit praise any more than we omit prayer? And should not praise come daily and as many times in the day as prayer does? It strikes me that to fail in praise is as unjustifiable as to fail in prayer! I shall leave it with your own heart and conscience, when you have asked and answered the question, to see to it in the future that far more of the sweet frankincense of praise is mingled with your daily oblation of devotion.

Praise is certainly not at all so common in family prayer as other forms of worship. We cannot, all of us, praise God in the family by joining in song, because we are not all able to raise a tune, but it would be well if we could. I agree with Matthew Henry when he says, “They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, read and sing do best of all.” There is a completeness in that kind of family worship which is much to be desired.

Whether in the family or not, yet personally and privately, let us endeavor to be filled with God’s praise and with His honor all the day. Be this our resolve—“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever.”

Brethren, praise cannot be a second-class business, for it is evidently due to God and that in a very high degree. A sense of justice ought to make us praise the Lord. It is the least we can do and, in some senses, it is the most that we can do in return for the multiplied benefits which He bestows upon us. What? No harvest of praise for Him who has sent the sunshine of His love and the rain of His Grace upon us? What? No revenue of praise for Him who is our gracious Lord and King! He does not exact from us any servile labor, but simply says, “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me.”

Praise is good, pleasant and delightful. Let us rank it among those debts which we would not wish to forget, but are eager to pay at once. Praise is an act which is pre-eminently characteristic of the true child of God. The man who does but pretend to piety will fast twice in the week and stand in the temple and offer something like prayer. But to praise God with all the heart, this is the mark of true adoption! This is the sign and token of a heart received by Divine Grace! We lack one of the most sure evidences of pure love to God if we live without presenting praise to His ever-blessed name.

Praising God is singularly beneficial to ourselves. If we had more of it, we should be greatly blessed. What could lift us so much above the trials of life; what could help us to bear the burden and heat of the day so well as songs of praise unto the Most High? The soldier marches without weariness when the band is playing uplifting strains; the sailor, as he pulls the rope or lifts the anchor, utters a cheery cry to aid his toil—let us try the animating power of hymns of praise! Nothing would oil the wheels of the chariot of life so well as more of the praising of God. Praise would end murmuring and nurse contentment. If our mouths were filled with the praises of God, there would be no room for grumbling. Praise would throw a halo of glory around the head of toil and thought! In its sunlight, the most common duties of life would be transfigured! Sanctified by prayer and praise, each duty would be raised into a hallowed worship akin to that of Heaven! It would make us more happy, more holy and more heavenly, if we would say, “I will extol You, my God, O King.”

Besides, Brothers and Sisters, unless we praise God here, are we preparing for our eternal Home? There, all is praise! How can we hope to enter there if we are strangers to that exercise? This life is a preparatory school and in it we are preparing for the high engagements of the perfected. Are you not eager to rehearse the everlasting hallelujahs?—

*“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise.  
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!”*

Learn the essential elements of heavenly praise by the practice of joyful thanksgiving, adoring reverence and wondering love, so that, when you step into Heaven, you may take your place among the singers and say, “I have been practicing these songs for years. I have praised God while I was in a world of sin and suffering and when I was weighed down by a feeble body. And now that I am set free from earth and sin and the bondage of the flesh, I take up the same strain to sing more sweetly to the same Lord and God!”

I wish I knew how to speak so as to stir up every child of God to praise. As for you that are not His children—oh, that you were! You must be born again! You cannot praise God aright till you are. “Unto the wicked, God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth?” You can offer Him no real praise while your hearts are at enmity to Him. Be you reconciled to God by the death of His Son and then you will praise Him! Let no one that has tasted that the Lord is gracious; let no one that has ever been delivered from sin by the Atonement of Christ ever fail to pay unto the Lord his daily tribute of thanksgiving! To help us in this joyful duty of praise we will turn to our text and keep to it. May the Holy Spirit instruct us by it!

I. In our text we have, first of all, THE RESOLVE OF PERSONAL LOYALTY—“I will extol You, my God, O King.” David personally comes before his God and King and utters this deliberate resolution that he will praise the Divine Majesty forever.

Note here, first, that he pays homage to God as his King. There is no praising God aright if we do not see Him upon the Throne, reigning with unquestioned sway. Disobedient subjects cannot praise their sovereign. You must take up the Lord’s yoke—it is easy and His burden is light. You must come and touch His silver scepter and receive His mercy—and acknowledge Him to be your rightful Monarch, Lawgiver and Ruler. Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign—where God is truly known, He is always known as supreme. Over the united kingdom of our body, soul and spirit the Lord must reign with undisputed authority. What a joy it is to have such a King! “O King,” says David, and it seems to have been a sweet morsel in his mouth. He was, himself, a king after the earthly fashion, but to him, God, alone, was King. Our King is no tyrant, no maker of cruel laws. He demands no crushing tribute or forced service! His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace. His Laws are just and good and in the keeping of them there is great reward. Let others exult that they are their own masters—our joy is that God is our King! Let others yield to this or that passion, or desire—as for us, we find our freedom in complete subjection to our heavenly King! Let us, then, praise God by loyally accepting Him as our King. Let us repeat with exultation the hymn we just now sang—

*“Crown Him, crown Him,  
King of kings, and Lord of lords.”*

Let us not be satisfied that He should reign over us, alone, but let us long that the whole earth should be filled with His Glory. Be this our daily prayer—“Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven.” Let this be our constant ascription of praise—“For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the Glory, forever. Amen.”

Note that the Psalmist, also, in this first sentence, praises the Lord by a present personal appropriation of God to himself by faith—“I will extol You, my God.” That word, “my,” is a drop of honey. No, it is like Jonathan’s woods, full of honey—it seems to drip from every bough and he that comes into it stands knee-deep in sweetness! “My God” is as high a note as an angel can reach! What is another man’s god to me? He must be my God or I shall not extol Him! Say, dear Heart, have you ever taken God to be your God? Can you say with David in another place, “This God is our God forever and ever. He shall be our guide, even unto death”? Blessed was Thomas when he bowed down and put his finger into the print of his Master’s wounds and cried, “My Lord and my God!” That double-handed grip of appropriation marked the death of his painful unbelief! Can you say, “Jehovah is my God?” To us there are Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but these are one God, and this one God is our own God! Let others worship whom they will, this God our soul adores and loves—yes, claims to be her personal possession! O Beloved, if you can say, “My God,” you will be bound to exalt Him! If He has given Himself to you so that you can say, “My Beloved is mine,” you will give yourself to Him and you will add, “And I am His.” Those two sentences, like two silken covers of a book, shut in, within them, the full score of the music of Heaven!

Observe that David is firmly resolved to praise God. My text has four, “I wills,” in it. Frequently it is foolish for us poor mortals to say, “I will,” because our will is so feeble and fickle. But when we resolve upon the praise of God, we may say, “I will,” and, “I will,” and, “I will,” and, “I will,” till we make a solid square of determinations! Let me tell you, you will have need to say, “I will,” a great many times, for many obstacles will hinder your resolve. There will come depression of spirit and then you must say, “I will extol You, my God, O King.” Poverty, sickness, losses and crosses may assail you—and then you must say, “I will praise Your name forever and ever.” The devil will come and tell you that you have no interest in Christ, but you must say, “Every day will I bless You.” Death will come and, perhaps, you will be under the fear of it—then it will be incumbent upon you to cry, “And I will praise Your name forever and ever!”—

*“Sing, though sense and carnal reason  
Gladly would stop the joyful song!  
Sing and count it highest treason  
For a saint to hold his tongue.”*

A bold man took this motto—“While I live, I’ll crow.” But our motto is, “While I live, I’ll praise.” An old motto was, “Dum spiro spero,” but the saint improves upon it, and cries, “Dum expiro spero.” Not only while I live, I will hope, but when I die, I will hope! And he even gets beyond all that, and determines—“Whether I live or die I will praise my God!” “O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.”

While David is thus resolute, I want you to notice that the resolution is strictly personal. He says, “I will extol You.” Whatever others do, my own mind is made up. David was very glad when others praised God. He delighted to join with the great congregation that kept Holy Day, but still, he was attentive to his own heart and his own praise. There is no selfishness in looking well to your own personal state and condition before the Lord. He cannot be called a selfish citizen who is very careful to render his own personal suit and service to his king. A company of persons praising God would be nothing unless each individual was sincere and earnest in the worship. The praise of the great congregation is precious in proportion as each individual, with all his heart, is saying, “I will extol You, my God, O King.” Come, my Soul, I will not sit silent because so many others are singing! However many songsters there may be, they cannot sing for me— they cannot pay my private debt of praise—therefore awake, my Heart, and extol your God and King! What if others refuse to sing? What if a shameful silence is observed in reference to the praises of God? Then, my Heart, I must bestir you all the more to a double diligence that you may, with even greater zeal, extol your God and King! I will sing a solo if I cannot find a choir in which I may take my part! Anyway, my God, I will extol You. At this hour men go off to other lords and they set up this and that new-made god, but as for me, my ear is bored to Jehovah’s doorpost. I will not go out from His service forever. Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar. Whatever happens, I will extol You, my God, O King!

Now Brothers and Sisters, have you been losing your own personality in the multitude? As members of a large Church, have you thought, “Things will go on very well without me”? Correct that mistake! Each individual trust has its own note to bring to God. Let Him not have to say to you, “You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices.” Let us not be slow in His praise, since He has been so swift in His Grace.

Once more upon this head—while David is thus loyally resolving to praise God, you will observe that he is doing it all the time. The resolution to praise can only come from the man who is already praising God. When he says, “I will extol You,” he is already extolling! We go from praise to praise. The heart resolves and so plants the seed. And then the life is affected and the harvest springs up and ripens. O Brothers and Sisters, do not let us say, “I will extol You tomorrow,” or, “I will hope to praise You when I grow old, or when I have less business on hand.” No, no! You are this day in debt! This day acknowledge your obligation. We cannot praise God too soon. Our very first breath is a gift from God and it should be spent to the Creator’s praise! The early morning hour should he dedicated to praise—do not the birds set us the example? In this matter he gives twice who gives quickly. Let your praise follow quickly upon the benefit you receive, lest even during the delay you be found guilty of ingratitude! As soon as a mercy touches our coasts, we should welcome it with acclamation. Let us copy the little chick, which, as it drinks, lifts up its head, as if to give thanks. Our thanksgiving should echo the voice of Divine loving kindness. Before the Lord our King, let us continually rejoice as we bless Him and speak well of His name.

Thus I have set before you the resolve of a loyal spirit. Are you loyal to your God and King? Then I charge you to glorify His name. Lift up your hearts in His praise and in all manner of ways make His name great. Praise Him with your lips. Praise Him with your lives. Praise Him with your substance. Praise Him with every faculty and capacity. Be inventive in methods of praise—“sing unto the Lord a new song.” Bring forth the long-stored and costly alabaster box! Break it and pour the sweet nard upon your Redeemer’s head and feet. With penitents and martyrs extol Him! With Prophets and Apostles extol Him! With saints and angels extol Him! Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

II. And now I must conduct you to the second clause of the text which is equally full and instructive. We have in the second part of it THE CONCLUSION OF AN INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION—“And I will bless Your name forever and ever.” Blind praise is not fit for the all-seeing God. God forbade of old the bringing of blind sacrifices to His altar. Our praise ought to have a brain as well as a tongue. We ought to know who the God is whom we praise—therefore David says, “I will bless Your name,” by which he means—Your Character, Your deeds, Your revealed attributes.

First, observe that he presents the worship of inward admiration—he knows and, therefore, he blesses the Divine name. What is this act of blessing? Sometimes, “bless,” would appear to be used interchangeably with, “praise,” yet there is a difference, for it is written, “All your works shall praise You, O Lord; and Your saints shall bless You.” You can praise a man and yet you may never bless him. A great artist, for instance—you may praise him, but he may be so ungenerous to you and others that it may never occur to you to bless him. Blessing has something in it of love and delight. It is a nearer, dearer, heartier thing than praise. “I will bless Your name,” that is to say—“I will take an intense delight in Your name—I will lovingly rejoice in it.”

The very thought is that God is a source of happiness to our hearts and the more we muse upon His Character, the more joyous we become. The Lord’s name is Love. He is merciful and gracious, tender and pitiful. Moreover, He is a just God and righteous, faithful, true and holy. He is a mighty God and wise and unchanging. He is a prayer-hearing God and He always keeps His promise. We would not have Him other than He is. We have a sweet contentment in God as He is revealed in Holy Scripture. It is not everybody that can say this, for a great many professors nowadays desire a god of their own making and shaping. If they find anything in Scripture concerning God which grates upon their tender susceptibilities, they cannot stand it! The God that casts the wicked from His Presence forever—they cannot believe in Him—they therefore make unto themselves a false deity who is indifferent to sin! All that is revealed concerning God is, to me, abundantly satisfactory. If I do not comprehend its full meaning, I bow before its mystery. If I hear anything of my God which does not yield me delight, I feel that in it I must be out of order with Him, either through sin or ignorance, and I say, “What I know not, teach me, O God.” I doubt not that perfectly holy and completely instructed beings are fully content with everything that God does and are ready to praise Him for all. Do not our souls even now bless the Lord our God who chose us, redeemed us and called us by His Grace? Whether we view Him as Maker, Provider, Savior, King, or Father, we find in Him an unfathomable sea of joy! He is God, our exceeding joy. Therefore we sit down in holy quiet and feel our soul saying, “Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!” He is what we would have Him to be. He is better than we could have supposed or imagined! He is the crown of delight, the climax of goodness, the sum of all perfection! As often as we see the light, or feel the sun, we would bless the name of the Lord!

I think when David said, “I will bless Your name,” he meant that he wished well to the Lord. To bless a person means to do that person good. By blessing us, what untold benefits the Lord bestows! We cannot bless God in such a sense as that in which He blesses us, but we would if we could. If we cannot give anything to God, we can desire that He may be known, loved and obeyed by all our fellow men. We can wish well to His Kingdom and cause in the world. We can bless Him by blessing His people, by working for the fulfillment of His purposes, by obeying His precepts and by taking delight in His ordinances. We can bless Him by submission to His chastening hand and by gratitude for His daily benefits. Sometimes we say with the Psalmist, “O my Soul, you have said unto the Lord, You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to You; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.” Oh, that I could wash Jesus Christ’s feet! Is there a Believer here, man or woman, but would aspire to that office? It is not denied you—you can wash His feet by caring for His poor people and relieving their needs. You cannot feast your Redeemer—He is not hungry—but some of His people are! Feed them! He is not thirsty, but some of His disciples are. Give them a cup of cold water in the Master’s name and He will accept it as given to Himself. Do you not feel, today, you that love Him, as if you wanted to do something for Him? Arise and do it! And so bless Him. It is one of the instincts of a true Christian to wish to do something for his God and King who has done everything for him. He loved me and gave Himself for me— should I not give myself for Him? Oh, for perfect consecration! Oh, to bless God by laying our all upon His altar and spending our lives in His service!

It seems, then, dear Friends, that David studied the Character and works of God and thus praised Him. Knowledge should lead our song. The more we know of God, the more acceptably shall we bless Him through Jesus Christ. I exhort you, therefore, to acquaint yourselves with God! Study His Holy Book. As in a mirror you may here see the Glory of the Lord reflected, especially in the Person of the Lord Jesus who is, in truth, the Word, the very name of the Lord! It would be a pity that we should spoil our praises by ignorance—they that know the name of the Lord will trust Him and will praise Him.

It appears from this text that David discovered nothing, after a long study of God, which would be an exception to this rule. He does not say, “I will bless Your name in all but one thing. I have seen some point of terror in what You have revealed of Yourself and, in that thing I cannot bless You.” No, without any exception he reverently adores and joyfully blesses God! All his heart is contented with all of God that is revealed. Is it so with us, Beloved? I earnestly hope it is.

I beg you to notice how intense he grows over this—“I will bless Your name forever and ever.” You have heard the quaint saying of, “forever and a day”? Here you have an advance upon it—it is, “forever,” and then another, “forever.” He says, “I will bless your name forever.” Is not that long enough? No, he adds, “and ever.” Are there two forevers, two eternities? Brothers and Sisters, if there were 50 eternities, we would spend them all in blessing the name of the Lord our God! “I will bless Your name forever and ever.” It would be absurd to explain this hyperbolical expression. It runs parallel with the words of Addison, when he says—

*“Through all eternity to You  
My song of joy I’ll raise!  
But oh, eternity’s too short  
To utter all Your praise!”*

Somebody quibbled at that verse the other day. He said, “Eternity cannot be too short.” Ah, my dear Friend, you are not a poet, I can see. But if you could get just a spark of poetry into your soul, literalism would vanish! Truly, in poetry and in praise, the letter kills! Language is a poor vehicle of expression when the soul is on fire. Words are good enough things for our cool judgement, but when thoughts are full of praise, they break the back of words! How often have I stood here and felt that if I could throw my tongue away and let my heart speak without these syllables and arbitrary sounds, then I might express myself! David speaks as if he scorned to be limited by language. He must leap over even time and possibility to get room for his heart! “I will bless Your name forever and ever.” How I enjoy these enthusiastic expressions! It shows that when David blessed the Lord, he did it heartily. While he was musing, the fire burned. He felt like dancing before the ark. He was in much the same frame of mind as Dr. Watts when he sang—

*“From You, my God, my joys shall rise  
And run eternal rounds,  
Beyond the limits of the skies,  
And all created bounds.”*

III. But time will fail me unless I pass on at once to the third sentence of our text, which is, THE PLEDGE OF DAILY REMEMBRANCE. Upon this I would dwell with very great earnestness. If you forget my discourse, I would like you to remember this part of the text. “Every day will I bless You.” I will not do it now and have done with it. I will not take a week of the year in which to praise You and then leave the other 51 weeks silent, but, “every day will I bless You.” All the year round will I extol my God. Why should it be so?

The greatness of the gifts we have already received demands it . We can never fully express our gratitude for saving Grace and, therefore, we must keep on at it. A few years ago we were lost and dead, but we were found and made alive again. We must praise God every day for this. We were black as night with sin, but now we are washed whiter than snow—when can we leave off praising our Lord for this? He loved me and gave Himself for me—when can the day come that I shall cease to praise Him for this? Gethsemane and the bloody sweat; Calvary and the precious blood—when shall we ever have done with praising our dear Lord for all He suffered when He bought us with His own heart’s blood? No, if it were only the first mercies, the mercy of election, the mercy of redemption, the mercy of effectual calling, the mercy of adoption—we would have had enough to begin with to make us sing unto the Lord every day of our lives! The Light of God which has risen upon us warms all our days with gladness—it shall also light them up with praise!

Today it becomes us to sing of the mercy of yesterday . The waves of love as well as of time have washed us up upon the shore of today and the beach is strewn with love! Here I find myself on a Sunday morning, exulting because another six days work is done and strength has been given for it! Some of us have experienced a world of loving kindness between one Sabbath and another. If we had never had anything else from God but what we have received during the last week, we have overwhelming reason for extolling Him today! If there is any day in which we would leave off praising God, it must not be the Lord’s Day, for—

*“This is the day the Lord has made,  
He calls the hours His own.  
Let Heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,  
And praise surround the Throne.”*

Oh, let us magnify the Lord on the day of which it can be said— *“Today He rose and left the dead  
And Satan’s empire fell!  
Today the saints His triumphs spread,  
And all His wonders tell.”*

When we reach tomorrow, shall we not praise God for the blessing of the Sabbath? Surely you cannot have forgotten the Lord so soon as Monday! Before you go out into the world, wash your face in the clear crystal of praise. Bury each yesterday in the fine linen and spices of thankfulness.

Each day has its mercy and should render its praise . When Monday is over, you will have something to praise God for on Tuesday. He that watches for God’s hand will never be long without seeing it. If you will only spy out God’s mercies with half an eye, you will see them every day of the year. Fresh are the dews of each morning and equally fresh are its blessings. “Fresh trouble,” says one. Praise God for the trouble, for it is a richer form of blessing! “Fresh care,” says one. Cast all your care on Him who cares for you and that act will, in itself, bless you. “Fresh labor,” says another. Yes, but fresh strength, too.

There is never a night but what there comes a day after it—never an affliction without its consolation. Every day you must utter the memory of His great goodness.

If we cannot praise God on any one day for what we have had that day, let us praise Him for tomorrow. “It is better on before.” Let us learn that quaint verse—

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

Let us forestall our future and draw upon the promises. What if today I am down? Tomorrow I shall be up! What if to-day I cast ashes on my head? Tomorrow the Lord shall crown me with loving kindness! What if today my pains trouble me, they will soon be gone! It will be all the same a hundred years from now, at any rate, and so let me praise God for what is within measurable distance. In a few years I shall be with the angels and be with my Lord, Himself. Blessed be His name! Begin to enjoy your Heaven now! What says the Apostle? “For our citizenship is in Heaven”— not is to be, but is! We belong to Heaven, now, our names are enrolled among its citizens and the privileges of the New Jerusalem belong to us at this present moment. Christ is ours and God is ours!—

*“This world is ours and worlds to come!*

*Earth is our lodge and Heaven our home.”*Therefore let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad and praise the name of God this very day.  
“Every day,” he says, “will I bless You.” There is a seasonableness about

the praising of God every day . Praise is in season every month. You awoke, the sunlight streamed into the windows and touched your eyelids. And you said, “Bless God. Here is a charming summer’s day.” Birds were singing and flowers were pouring out their perfume. You could not help praising God. But another day it was dark at the time of your rising. You struck a match and lit your candle. A thick fog hung like a blanket over all. If you were a wise man, you said, “Come, I shall not get through the day if I do not make up my mind to praise God. This is the kind of weather in which I must bless God or else go down in despair.” So you woke yourself up and began to adore the Lord. One morning you awoke after a refreshing night’s rest and you praised God for it. But on another occasion you had tossed about through a sleepless night and then you thanked God that the weary night was over. You smile, dear Friends, but there is always some reason for praising God. Certain fruits and meats are in season at special times, but the praise of God is always in season. It is good to praise the Lord in the daytime—how charming is the lark’s song as it carols up to Heaven’s gate! It is good to bless God at night—how delicious are the liquid notes of the nightingale as it thrills the night with its music! I do, therefore, say to you right heartily, “Come, let us together praise the Lord, in all sorts of weather and in all sorts of places.”

Sometimes I have said to myself, “During this last week I have been so full of pain that I am afraid I have forgotten to praise God as much as I should have done and, therefore, I will have a double draught of it now. I will get alone and have a special time of thankful thought. I would make up some of my old arrears and magnify the Lord above measure. I do not like feeling that there can ever be a day in which I have not praised Him. That day would surely be a blank in my life. Surely the sweetest praise that ever ascends to God is that which is poured forth by saints from beds of languishing. Praise in sad times is praise, indeed! When your dog loves you because it is dinnertime, you are not sure of him, but when somebody else tempts him with a bone and he will not leave you, though just now you struck him, then you feel that he is truly attached to you! We may learn from dogs that true affection is not dependent upon what it is just now receiving.

Let us not have a cupboard love for God because of His kind Providence, but let us love Him and praise Him for what He is and what He has done. Let us follow hard after Him when He seems to forsake us—and praise Him when He deals harshly with us—for this is true praise. For my part, though I am not long without affliction, I have no faults to find with my Lord, but I desire to praise Him and praise Him—and only to praise Him! Oh, that I knew how to do it worthily! Here is my resolve—“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless You.”

IV. The last sentence of the text sets forth THE HOPE OF ETERNAL ADORATION. David here exclaims, “And I will praise Your name forever and ever.”  
I am quite sure when David said that, he believed that God was unchangeable, for if God can change, how can I be sure that He will always be worthy of my praise? David knew that what God had been, He was and what He was, then, He would always be. He had not heard the sentence, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” nor yet that other, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed,” but he knew the Truth of God contained in both these texts and, therefore, he said, “I will praise Your name forever and ever.” As long as God Is, He will be worthy to be praised!

Another point is also clear— David believed in the immortality of the soul. He says, “I will praise Your name forever and ever.” That Truth was very dimly revealed in the Old Testament, but David knew it right well. He did not expect to sleep in oblivion, but to go on praising and, therefore, he said, “I will praise Your name forever and ever.” No cold hand fell upon him and no killing voice said to him “You shall die and never praise the Lord again.” Oh, no! He looked to live forever and ever—and praise forever and ever! Brothers and Sisters, such is our hope and we will never give it up. We feel eternal life within our souls! We challenge the cold hand of death to quench the immortal flame of our love, or to silence the ceaseless song of our praise! The dead cannot praise God and God is not the God of the dead, but of the living! Among the living we are numbered, through the Grace of God, and we know that we shall live because Jesus lives. When death shall come, it shall bring no destruction to us!

Though it shall change the conditions of our existence, it shall not change the object of our existence! Our tongue may be silenced for a little while, but our spirit, unaffected by the disease of the body, shall go on praising God in its own fashion and then, by-and-by, in the resurrection, even this poor tongue shall be revived—and body, soul and spirit shall together praise the God of Resurrection and eternal Glory. “I will praise Your name forever and ever.” We shall never grow weary of this hallowed exercise forever and ever. It will always be new, fresh, delightful! In Heaven they never require any change beyond those blessed variations of song, those new melodies which make up the everlasting harmony. On and on, forever telling the tale which never will be fully told, the saints will praise the name of the Lord forever and ever!

Of course, dear Friends, David’s resolve was that, as long as he was here below, he would never cease to praise God, and this is ours, also. Brethren, we may have to leave off some cherished engagements, but this we will never cease from. At a certain period of life a man may have to leave off preaching to a large congregation. Good old John Newton declared that he would never leave off preaching while he had breath in his body—and I admire his holy perseverance—but it was a pity that he did not leave off preaching at St. Mary Woolnoth, for he often wearied the people and forgot the thread of his discourse. He might have done better in another place. Ah, well, we may leave off preaching, but we shall never leave off praising! The day will come when you, my dear Friend, cannot go to Sunday school—I hope you will go as long as you can toddle there—but it may be you will not be able to interest the children—your memory will begin to fail. Bt even then you can go on praising the Lord! And you will.

I have known old people almost forget their own names and forget their own children, but I have known them still remember their Lord and Master! I have heard of one who lay dying and his friends tried to make him remember certain things, but he shook his head. At last one said, “Do you remember the Lord Jesus?” Then the mind came into full play, the eyes brightened and the old man eloquently praised his Savior! Our last gasp shall be given to the praise of the Lord!

When once we have passed through the iron gate and forded the dividing river, then we will begin to praise God in a manner more satisfactory than we can reach at present. After a nobler sort we will sing and adore. What soaring we will attempt upon the eagle wings of love! What plunges we will take into the crystal stream of praise! I think, for a while, when we first behold the Throne of God, we shall do no more than cast our crowns at the feet of Him that loved us and then bow down under a weight of speechless praise. We shall be overwhelmed with wonder and thankfulness! When we rise to our feet, again, we will join in the strain of our Brothers and Sisters redeemed by blood and only drop out of the song when again we feel overpowered with joyful adoration and are constrained, again, in holy silence to shrink to nothing before the infinite, unchanging God of Love.

Oh, to be there! To be there soon! We may be much nearer than we think. I cannot tell what I shall do, but I know this, I want no other Heaven than to praise God perfectly and eternally! Is it not so with you? A heart full of praise is Heaven in the bud! Perfect praise is Heaven fullblown. Let us close this discourse by asking Grace from God that, if we have been deficient in praise, we may now mend our ways and put on the garments of holy adoration. This day and onward, may our watchword be, “Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!”

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“NON NOBIS, DOMINE!”  
NO. 2784

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 22, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 16, 1878.

**“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake.”  
Psalm 115:1.**

EVERY careful reader can see the connection between this 115th Psalm and the one which precedes it. In the 114th Psalm we see the gracious and grateful Jews sitting around the Passover table, having eaten of the lamb and singing of the miracles of Jehovah at the Red Sea and the Jordan. It must have been a very jubilant song that they sang! I think I can hear them singing, “What ailed you, O you sea, that you fled? You Jordan, that you were driven back?” When that joyful hymn was finished and the cup of wine was passed around the table, they struck another note. They remembered their sad condition, as they heard the heathen say, “Where is now their God?” They remembered that perhaps for many a year there had been no miracle, no Prophet, no open vision— and then they began to chant a prayer that God would appear—not for their sakes, but for His own name’s sake, that the ancient Glory which He won for Himself at the Red Sea and the Jordan might not be lost— and that the heathen might no longer be able to tauntingly say, “Where is now their God?” because the wonders worked by God would cause them to tremble before Him.

Remember that when the Israelites came up out of Egypt and were marching through the wilderness, the Lord put “the dread of them and the fear of them” upon all the nations in their track, so that they were half defeated through the terror that had made them almost like dead men in the Presence of the mighty God of Israel! So, the Psalmist’s prayer here is, practically, “Lord, do the same again—not for our sakes, but for Your own name’s sake—that once again the heathen all around may know that there is a God in the midst of Israel—and that they may be caused again to tremble as they did before—and no longer blaspheme or defy the God of Jacob.” These observations will, I hope, show you how suitably this Psalm would be chanted while still the Paschal Supper was proceeding.

Now let us take the words of our text by themselves and examine them under the gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are, I think, instructive to us in five ways.”

I. First, they furnish us with A POWERFUL PLEA IN PRAYER—“Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake.”

There are time when this is the only plea that God’s people can use. There are other occasions when we can plead with God to bless us for this reason or for that, but, sometimes, there come dark experiences when there seems to be no reason that can suggest itself to us why God should give us deliverance, or vouchsafe us a blessing except this one— that He would be pleased to do it in order to glorify His own name. Moses is an example of how this plea prevails with the Lord. When he was on the mount with God and Jehovah threatened to destroy the idolatrous Israelites, Moses pleaded, “Why should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.”

Joshua also used the same plea when he said to the Lord, after Israel’s defeat at Ai, “What will You do unto Your great name?” He could not say, “Lord, hear me for Israel’s sake,” for they were utterly unworthy. He did not dare to say, “Deliver us for my sake”—he had not conceit or self-righteousness enough to present such a plea as that! He could not even say, “Hear us for Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob’s sake,” for the people had broken the Covenant which God had made with their fathers. So he pleaded with the Lord, “Think of Your own honor. Think of Your great name. Think of Your repute among the heathen.” And thus he prevailed. It is noteworthy that that awful attribute of holy jealousy, which, under some aspects, is like a terrible flame, is the very one which helps us when everything else fails. Jehovah is very jealous of His own honor and therefore it is that when the heathens say, “Where is now their God?” He answers their taunt by ceasing to chasten His people—not for their sakes, but for His own mercy and truth’s sake, that the heathen may not think Him unmerciful to His people, nor be able to accuse Him of being unfaithful to His Covenant.

Brothers and Sisters, in all your times of distress, you will do well to urge this plea with the Lord. Possibly you are pleading for a certain class of men or women who have grossly sinned. It may be that you have on your heart the case of one person who has gone to great lengths of iniquity. You can always plead, “Lord, save that sinful soul to make Your Grace the more illustrious. Do it that others who have witnessed his sin may admire Your wonderful compassion—that his relatives and friends who have heard his blasphemies and been horrified by them, may see what You can do when You bare Your almighty arm and magnify Your deeds of Grace.”  
You may be emboldened to urge that plea, notwithstanding the vileness of the person for whom you plead. In fact, the sinfulness of the sinner may even be your plea that God’s mercy and loving kindness may be seen the more resplendently by all who know of the sinful soul’s guilt. And if your prayer should not be on behalf of some gross transgressor, but on behalf of a fallen church—suppose it should be for a church that has lost its first love, a church that has turned aside from the Truth of God, a church which has ceased to be zealous, a church like that of Laodicea, fit only to be spewed out of the mouth of Christ—you may still come before Him and say, “Lord, revive it—not for that church’s sake, for You might well make it a desolation, like Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant was at the first—but do it for Your name’s sake that all may see that You can trim the lamp when it already smokes and gives forth a nauseous stench—that You can take the fig tree before it is utterly barren, and dig about it, and dung it, and make it bring forth fruit, O You wondrous Vinedresser of the vineyard!” I leave that thought with you, suggesting that in your solitude when you withdraw to pray—I mean you who, like Jacob, have your Jabboks and your Peniels—you will find that this is one of the mightiest weapons that you can wield in that secret midnight conflict. There is a sacred art of gripping even the Angel of the Covenant in that time of mysterious wrestling. Say, “For Christ’s sake, for God’s name’s sake, for His love’s sake, for the Gospel’s sake”—for all these are mightily prevalent pleas with the Most High.

Let me just whisper a word in the ear of anyone who has scarcely learned to pray. Poor Sinner—

*“Laden with guilt and full of fears”—*  
you say, “How can I plead with God for mercy? I have rejected it for years. I have often been rebuked and I have hardened my neck. I fear I have no plea with which to urge my suit in craving God’s mercy.” Here is one for you to use—say to Him, “For Your mercy and Your love’s sake, have pity upon me, the least deserving of all Your creatures, for, surely, if You will but save me, it will be an eternal wonder to men and to angels! If you will save me, then I will sing—

*“All Your mercy’s depths I prove,  
All its heights are seen in me!”*

I remember one who said, “Oh, if the Lord Jesus Christ will but pardon me, He shall never hear the last of it!” And this is what all poor guilty souls may truly say, “Should there be mercy for such a sinner as I am—so old a sinner—so daring a sinner—so God-provoking a sinner? God’s Grace blot out my sin? Will the Lord put me into His family and call me His child? Then, tell it in the deeps of Hell and let all the devils know what great things God can do! And tell it in the heights of Heaven and let all the principalities and powers there learn new music as they sing of the greatness of the loving kindness of the Lord who can pardon and save the very chief of sinners!” I suggest that every seeking sinner here should plead the name of God and the Glory of Christ—plead that He will be honored, that men will magnify His great name and the preciousness of His atoning blood and the power of His Gospel if it shall save you. This is a good plea—take care that you use it.

II. Now, secondly, my text appears to me to embody THE TRUE SPIRIT OF PIETY. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake.” That is to say, true religion does not seek its own honor.

Self-seeking is the exact opposite of the spirit of a true Christian. He would rather strip himself and say, “Not unto me, but unto You, O Lord, be all honor and glory!” He seeks no crown to put upon his own head. Twice he refused to wear it. Even if the world would press it upon him, he says, “Not unto me; not unto me.” He does not wish for honor. He has done with self-seeking. His one great objective, now, is to glorify God— “Unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake.” Do you not think, dear Friends, that if this is the true spirit of religion, we shall very often have to condemn ourselves for being so faulty in it?

For instance, suppose, in preaching the Gospel, a man has, even as a small part of his motive, that he may be esteemed an eloquent person, or that he may have influence over other men’s minds—I will not suppose that he has so sordid a motive as worldly gain—but I need not “suppose” what I have suggested, for it is lamentably true that this mixture of motives may steal over the preacher’s soul. Ah, but we must fight against this evil with all our might! Somebody once told Master John Bunyan that he had preached a delightful sermon. “You are too late,” said John, “the devil told me that before I left the pulpit.” Satan is very skillful in teaching us how to steal our Master’s Glory. Yet, if ever we speak aright, it is because we are taught of the Spirit and not because of our own wisdom. Even when we have had the undoubted help of the Holy Spirit, we are far too apt to attribute at least some little power to ourselves. But a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ loathes himself when he finds that this evil habit has fastened itself upon him—and he cries, “No, Lord! Not unto me, not unto me, but unto Your name give all the glory and praise.” We are to preach so as to glorify God, not to glorify ourselves—and the man who occupies the pulpit merely that he may manifest his own cleverness ought to be hurled from it, forthwith, for he has no right there whatever! “Glory be to God,” should always be the preacher’s motto.

And as it should be so with our preaching, do you not think that the same thing is true concerning our praying? Are there no petitions presented at Prayer Meetings in which there is at least some idea that we are saying very proper things, and very pretty things, and that people will think we have a great gift of prayer? Did you ever have such a feeling as that steal over you? Yet, my Brothers, the only prayer of the right kind is that which is offered for the Glory of God. If I turn from your public prayers and look into your private supplications, shall I not see self there?

The right spirit in which to do everything is to do all to the Glory of God. In almsgiving, for instance—a practice which, I trust, will never die out, though there are some who tell us that it is wicked to give to the poor—in almsgiving is it not possible to do it simply to get rid of the applicant, or to satisfy your own conscience, or that you may be thought generous? That is not right! We must give our alms to God alone. Let not our right hand know what our left hand gives, for it is not to man that we are giving it, but as unto the Lord. Let our offering be dropped into the box and nothing be said about it. Let us get as far as possible from the spoiling glance of the human eye, that the whole act may be as a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, something done for Jesus and for Jesus only, that He may have it and have all the glory of it.

And in any service that you may render, do you not know that it must be done simply and only for Christ’s sake if it is to be acceptable to Him? Yet, often, you can scarcely set a man to open pew doors, or to give out a hymn, or to teach a Sunday school class, but “great I” will be sure to lift its head unless it is constantly kept under! Pride grows swiftly, like other weeds. Yet remember that whatever we do in order that we may make ourselves the end and object of it, is spoiled in the doing and is not pleasing to God. Indeed, we are not offering it to God—we are offering it to ourselves! May God grant us Grace that we may never be swayed by the fear of man, or the wish to win human approbation! May we do that which we believe to be right because it is right and because we wish to honor and glorify God in doing it! And when we are rendering any service to the Master, let us never wish for human eyes to see it. That is the true spirit of piety—may God grant that we may have it to the full!

But oftentimes we cherish another kind of spirit. Even the sweet singer among you may be singing a hymn “to the praise and glory of God,” yet be thinking to himself or herself, all the while, “Do not those who are listening to me think that I have a very sweet voice?” Or, possibly, you are in the Sunday school and you feel, “Well, now, I really am one of the most efficient teachers here. They must think a great deal of me, or they ought to, at any rate.” Very often, even in the household, when we have done some little thing, we congratulate ourselves upon it and feel that everybody ought to pat us on the back and burn a little incense in our honor. Ah, dear Friends, if we think anything like this, may the Lord speedily drive it out of us! Such poor creatures as we are, if the Lord would let us be doormats for all His saints to wipe their dirty boots upon, it would be an honor to us. If He only allows us to be hewers of wood or drawers of water, like the Gibeonites of old—and if He accepts what we do, it will be all of His Grace. But for us to set up on our own account, to live to ourselves and to want honor and glory for ourselves—this will never do! We say, of some people, that they are “poor and proud” and, truly, that is what we are when we begin to boast! Lord, take away our pride— our poverty will not so much matter then!

III. I leave that point and come, thirdly, to use the Psalmist’s words in yet another sense. I think that the spirit of my text is A SAFE GUIDE IN THEOLOGY.

When I am going to read the Scriptures, to know what I am to believe, to learn what is to be my creed—even before I open my Bible, it is a good thing to say—“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake.” This is, to my mind, a test of what is true and what is false. If you meet with a system of theology which magnifies man, flee from it as far as you can! If the minister, whom you usually hear, tries to make man out to be a very fine fellow and says a great many things in his praise, you should let him have an empty place where you have been accustomed to sit. This shall be an infallible test to you concerning anyone’s ministry. If it is manpraising and honors man, it is not of God! The Negro said of a certain preacher in America, “He do make God so great.” I would that it might be said of all of us that our preaching made God great. That plan of salvation that makes man to be somebody, is a wrong one, depend upon it, for he is a nobody and nothing. That kind of preaching which leaves a great deal for man to do and tells him he can do it—well, Brothers and Sisters—let those people who are so very good, strong and great, go and listen to it! But as for you and me—at any rate, for the most of us—we know that, by nature, we are dead in trespasses and sins, that our strength is perfect weakness and, therefore, the kind of preaching that exalts man does not suit our experience. We do not ask for it, nor do we want it. It will poison those who receive it, for it comes not from God.

This is why I believe in the Doctrines of Grace. I believe in Divine Election because somebody must have the supreme will in this matter—and man’s will must not occupy the Throne of God—only the will of God. The words of Jehovah stand fast like the great mountains. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The Sovereignty of God is a Doctrine which lifts Him up high and, therefore, I accept it and reverently bow before it. According to some men, it seems that salvation is mainly the work of the creature. Christ died for him, but Christ may have died in vain unless he, by something that he does, makes Christ’s death effectual. That kind of teaching I do not believe because it throws the onus of redemption, after all, upon man, and makes him to give efficacy to the redemption of Christ! No, verily, but I believe that those for whom Christ gave Himself as a ransom shall surely be His forever—and that He did really redeem them and needs not that they add anything to make that everlasting ransom price sufficient and available for their deliverance.

There are some who seem to think that the sinner takes certain steps towards God before God comes to him, but it is not so. The sinner is dead and life must come to him from God before he can stir from the grave, or even have a wish to stir from it. And there are some who teach that after man is saved, he still needs to keep himself and confirm himself in Grace—in fact that his salvation depends upon himself. But it is not so, for He who has called us and saved us, has given us gifts which He will never take back and, having once loved us, He will love us to the end. We are firmly persuaded that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. From top to bottom, salvation is all of the Grace of God! From its first letter, Alpha, to its last letter, Omega, it is all Grace, Grace, Grace! There is no room for human merit and no room for confidence in self whatever! There is room for good works, yet no room for glorifying in them, “for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” You know that jewelers have certain tests by which, if you take them a ring or a coin, they can tell you at once whether it is gold or silver. Here is a test for you to apply and by it you may tell whether a thing is true or not. Does it glorify God? Then, accept it. If it does not, if it glorifies man—puts human will, human ability, human merit into the place of the mercy and the Grace of God—away with it, for it is not food fit for your souls to feed upon! I wish that all Christians were more concerned for the Glory of God than they are. Surely, then, they would become sounder in doctrine than many are nowadays.

IV. The fourth way of using our text is this. It seems to me to be A PRACTICAL DIRECTION IN LIFE.  
You want to know, young man, how to direct your steps aright, and how to cleanse your way. This text will help you, dear Brother,

 in the selection of your sphere of service. You will always be safe in doing that which is not for your own glory, but which is distinctly for the Glory of God. Have you two situations offered to you? Are they equally remunerative, or equally difficult? Select that one in which you may hope to glorify God more than you could in the other! This is the voice behind you which says, “This is the way; walk you in it.” Are you choosing a profession, or seeking an honorable career in life? Then, I pray you, let this text guide you. Adoniram Judson, full of ambition, seeking a great name, met with this text and rebelled against it. But he says that all his bright visions for the future seemed to vanish as these words sounded in his soul, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory.” Are you going to live, young man, to get glory to yourself? It will not do! It will not do. If the Lord loves you, He will not let it be so. “But what, then, am I to do?” you ask. Why, labor so to live, in any calling, that you may bring glory to God in it!  
Sometimes my text will guide you as to which you should choose out of two courses of action that lie before you. Did I understand that you have had a little tiff with your brother or sister, and the question with you is, “What shall I do in this dispute?” Something says, “Go and make up and say that you were wrong.” But something else says, “Oh, but you know that we must not always be giving way and yielding because some people, if you give them an inch, will take a mile!” So, possibly, you do not know which course to take. Which is the one you do not wish to follow? Why, you do not like to humble yourself! Then that is the plan you should adopt! What flesh revolts against, your spirit should choose. Say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory. I will do that which will most honor my Lord and Master—and not that which would best please myself.”  
Or it may be that there are two ways in which you might serve God and you are rather perplexed about which one to choose. One of them would give you a good share of honor. The other would involve more work and you would not be likely to get much credit out of it. You really do not know which of the two you ought to choose. I suggest, Brother, that the probabilities are that that is the right one for you from which you will get the least credit. At any rate, I am afraid that if you hold the scales impartially, as you think, your hand will incline just a little to give the preponderance to that which would bring you into fame. Do not do it—school yourself so that you can say, “For my Master’s sake alone will I choose that which shall be my course, and I will follow where He leads the way, seeking to give Him all the glory.” That is a direction post which, I think, will guide you out of many of the perplexities of life.  
V. Now, fifthly, and lastly, my text seems to contain within itself THE ACCEPTABLE SPIRIT IN WHICH TO REVIEW THE PAST.  
Brothers and Sisters, this is the spirit in which to live. Has God blessed us? Do we look back upon honorable and useful lives? Has our Sunday school class brought in souls for Christ? Have we been privileged to preach the Gospel and has the Lord given us converts? Then let us be sure to stick to the text—“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory.” Now, young man, if you are beginning to serve the Savior and He has given you success, your conduct in this first time of testing may decide the whole of your future life. “As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.” There are very few men who can bear success—none can do so unless great Grace is given to them! And if, after a little success, you begin to say, “There now, I am somebody. Did I not do that well? These poor old fogies do not know how to do it—I will teach them”—you will have to go into the back rank, Brother, you are not yet able to endure success! It is clear that you cannot stand praise. But if, when God gives you blessing, you give Him every atom of the glory and clear yourself of everything like boasting, then the Lord will continue to bless you because it will be safe for Him to do so. He is not going to put His treasure, let me tell you, into the leaky vessels of self-exaltation. No, no—He wants good sea-going ships which bear at the masthead the flag on which is inscribed, “Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory.”  
Yes, and when the time comes for us to die, this is the spirit in which to die, for it is the beginning of Heaven. What are they doing in Heaven? If we could look in there, what would we see? There are crowns there, laid up for those that fight the good fight and finish their course—but do you see what the victors are doing with their crowns? They will not wear them! No, not they—they cast them down at Christ’s feet, crying, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory.” Brother, Sister—living, dying—let this be your continual cry! If the Lord favors you, honors you, blesses you, always say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, be the glory.” Are you prosperous in business? Do not be proud of your riches. Are you getting on in education? Do not boast of what you know, for there is a great deal more that you do not know. Has God given you a few converts? Do not begin thinking that you are a mighty soulwinner, for there are many more yet to be won. The way up is downward! Your Master descended that He might afterwards ascend and fill all things—and your way of ascent must be downward, downward, downward—so that you become less and less, and less. Say over and over again, “Not unto us, not unto us,” till you utterly loathe the idea of human glory and let the Lord have all the praise!  
As a Church we can look back upon many years of spiritual prosperity, but we must still sing, “Non nobis, non nobis, non nobis, Domine.” We can bless and magnify the Lord for unity, peace, concord and perpetual increase and success in all the works of our hands. Glory be unto the Lord for it! But, as Paul shook off the viper from his hand into the fire, so would we shake off everything that looks like attributing success to ourselves, even to our prayers, our tears, our devotion. Let all the glory be given to God alone, for—  
*“To Him all the glory belongs.”*  
Now I finish by saying that perhaps there is someone here who is longing to be saved and the only thing that stands in his way is that he will not come to this point and say, “Not unto us, not unto us.” Ah, my Friend! You want to be a little somebody! You want to do something, or be something. Brother, be nothing, for then shall Christ be your All-inAll! Remember that the end of the creature is the beginning of the Creator. When you have done with every other confidence, then you can have confidence in God. The Lord bless you to this end, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen,

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 115.**

This is one of the Hallel Psalms which were sung by the Jews at the feast of the Passover. It is highly probable that they were sung by our Lord on that memorable night when He instituted the sacred feast which is to be the perpetual memorial of His death, “until He comes.” They have, however, a message for us who are now gathered together here.

Verses 1, 2. Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth’s sake. Why should the heathen say, Where is now their God? They talk about what He did when He brought His people up out of Egypt—but they tauntingly ask, “Where is now their God?” You are not dead, O God! Nor are You even waxing weak—will You not let the heathen know that they are resisting You in vain?

3. But our God is in the heavens. Where they cannot see Him. But that is just where He should be—in His own royal pavilion, seated upon His own Throne—out of gunshot of all His enemies—where He can survey the whole world, where He is dependent upon none, but absolutely supreme over all—“Our God is in the heavens.”

3. He has done whatever He has pleased. What a grand sentence that is! After all, His eternal purposes are continually being fulfilled. His decrees can never fail to be accomplished. He is not a thwarted and defeated God—not One who has to wait upon His creatures to know their pleasure, but, “He has done whatever He has pleased.” How absolute and unlimited those words are! “Whatever He has pleased.” He has willed it and He has done it. As for the heathens who say, “Where is now their God?” we may ask, in holy derision, “Where are their gods, and what sort of gods are they?” The Psalmist gives the answer.

4. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. Mere metal—called precious metal, yet, if made into idols, no better than any other metal. This shows the amount that a man will spend upon making to himself a god that is no god—but what a fool he is to do so! How can a man call that a “god,” which did not make him, but which he himself made? “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.”

5. They have mouths, but they speak not. I want you to notice how the Psalmist seems to have an image before him and he points first to its head and mocks at its different parts. And then he points to its hands and its feet, and he utters scathing sarcasms about the whole person of the idol god.

5-7. Eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. “They have mouths.” To carry out their idea of God, the makers of idols have given them mouths, but they cannot speak through them— they are dumb. Shall a man believe a dumb thing to be a god? The idols cannot communicate anything to him—it is not possible for them to speak any word of encouragement, or threat, or promise—“They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they.” Some idols had precious gems placed in their heads to appear like eyes, but they cannot see through them, for they are blind. Is it not a contradiction to speak of a blind god? What a blind man must he be who worships a blind god! “Eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears.” Some Indian idols certainly have ears, for they have elephants’ ears, monstrous lobes and I think, perhaps, the Psalmist was referring to such ears as those. “They have ears,” he says, “but they hear not.” Then what is the use of their ears? You cannot communicate anything to them, so, why do you utter prayers to a thing that cannot hear what you say? Why do you present praises to images that know not what you are saying? “They have ears, but they hear not.” “Noses have they.” I note the grim sarcasm of this remark of the Psalmist. It reminds me of Elijah’s taunting words to the prophets of Baal, “Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or, perhaps he sleeps and must be awakened.”

The ancient Hebrews were not accustomed to treat idolatry with any kind of respect. They poured all sorts of ridicule upon it. Nowadays we are expected to speak very respectfully concerning all false religions—and some philosophers and divines tell us that there is something good in them all. And they say that modern Catholicism, with its many gods, and its rotten rags and cast clouts, which they call relics, is to be treated very delicately. Perhaps someone asks, “Is it not a religion?” Yes, a religion for fools—but not for those who think! “Noses have they, but they smell not.” Their devotees fill the room with the smoke of incense—they burn sweet spices before the idols but the idols nostrils are not thereby gratified. “They have hands,” says the Psalmist. Their makers give them hands, “but they handle not.” They cannot even receive the offerings presented to them! They cannot stretch out their hands to help their votaries. They are without feeling—so the original tells us, yet they have hands, but they are useless. “Feet have they, but they walk not.” They could not even mount to their shrines by themselves—they must be lifted there and fastened with nails into their sockets!

One of the saddest sights to my mind—too sad to be ludicrous—is to see a Catholic chapel, as I have often seen it, when the priest is up on the top of the altar, taking down the various images, and dusting the dolls. He, of course, pays them no sort of reverence, but dusts them as your maid does the things in your bedchamber or your drawing room. Yet these are the things that will be worshipped when the bell rings in an hour’s time—these very things that have been dusted and treated in this fashion just like ordinary household ornaments! “Feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.” Their priests pretend that by a kind of sacred ventriloquism, they make an articulate muttering—but the Psalmist very properly says, “Neither speak they through their throat.” They cannot whisper, they cannot even mutter! They cannot make even as much noise as a beast or a bird can, for they are lifeless and useless.

8. They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusts in them. That is to say, they are as stupid and doltish as the idols they make. If they can bow down and worship such things as these, surely the worshippers are fitted for the gods and the gods for the worshippers! Now, Brothers and Sisters, remember that there is a spiritual idolatry that is very much in vogue nowadays. Certain “thinkers”—as they delight to call themselves, whose religion is known as “modern thought”—do not accept the one living and true God as He reveals Himself in the Old and the New Testaments—they make a god out of what they are pleased to call their own consciousness. Truly, their idols are reason and thought— the work of men’s brains. Their god does not hear prayer because it would be absurd, they say, to suppose that prayer can have any effect on Deity. Their god has little or no regard for justice—according to them, you may live as you like, but all will come right at last. They hold out a “larger hope” that the wicked will all be restored to God’s favor. If that should be the case, there would be no justice left upon the face of the earth or in Heaven either.

All this is false! A god that a man can comprehend is not really a god at all. A god that I could create from my own brain must, of necessity, be no god. There can only be the one God who is made known to us by Divine Revelation. God must be infinitely greater than the human mind— He must be beyond our utmost conception—of whom we can know but little compared with what He really is, and that little He must Himself reveal to us. Beware, I pray you, of a god that you make for yourself! Take God as you find Him in this Book and worship Him. Otherwise, you will find that there may be mental idols as well as idols of silver, gold, wood and stone.

“The God of Abraham praise.” “The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,” the God of the whole earth shall He be called. “The God that led His people out of Egypt, the God of Sinai is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” And “this God is our God forever and ever.” Ours is no new religion—it is the religion of Jehovah worship, and to this we will cling, whoever may oppose.

9-11. O Israel, trust you in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. You that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. The first of this set of sentences seems to me to be addressed by way of exhortation, but the second is a sort of soliloquy in which the Psalmist, having exhorted others to trust, says, “Well they may trust, for God is both their active and their passive Helper—their help and their shield.” O you who know Him, and love Him, you who are of the house of Israel, however other men may turn aside to idols, keep yourselves steadfast to Jehovah and trust in Him even when He is mocked and ridiculed! O you who are His ministers, the house of Aaron, especially devoted to His service, you know Him best and you should trust Him most! O all of you, proselytes of the gate, who are not of the seed of Israel, still fear Jehovah and trust in Him, for He is your help and your shield!

12. The LORD has been mindful of us: He will bless, He will bless the house of Israel, He will bless the house of Aaron. He had been mindful of Israel and this guaranteed that He would still bless His people. “The times are dark and cloudy,” the Psalmist seems to say, “but by His ancient mercies, our faith is established, and our hope encouraged.”

13. He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great. Now, little ones, look out for the blessing that is meant for you—“He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.” Those who have but little faith, little joy, little Divine Grace, little growth, He will still bless!

14-16. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children. You are blessed of the LORD which made Heaven and earth. The Heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth has He given to the children of men. This may in part account for the fact that He is not known, and not honored among men. He is, Himself, in Heaven and, for a while, He has left men to follow their own devices. Hence it is that they have set up false gods. But, whatever others may do, or not do, let us praise the name of the Lord!

17. The dead praise not the LORD. No song comes up from that dark morgue, no praise ascends to God from those that are asleep in the grave. The living among them praise Him in Heaven, but “the dead praise not the Lord.”

17, 18. Neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD. “Praise the Lord,” that is, “Hallelujah!” The Psalm could not end with a better note than that. So may all our lives end, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—152, 242, 219.  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE LORD BLESSING HIS SAINTS  
NO. 1077

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 26, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You are blessed of the Lord [or of JEHOVAH]  
which made Heaven and earth.”  
Psalm 115:15.**

WITHOUT any preface, (for where there is such a feast before us anything which detains us from the table will be out of place), let us come at once to the delightful words of our text and may the Holy Spirit lead us into their inner sense! Here is a blessing spoken of. The Lord that made Heaven and earth has been pleased to bless His people. And this blessing has several peculiarities about it of which we shall speak particularly. It will help us to reach the marrow and fatness of the text if we consider in detail the orthodox number of five points.

First, it is a blessing belonging to a peculiar people. Secondly, it is a blessing coming from a peculiar quarter. Thirdly, a blessing with a peculiar date. Fourthly, a blessing with a peculiar certainty, and fifthly, a blessing involving a peculiar duty. Where there is so much country to survey we must travel swiftly and make but a short stay upon any single thought.

I. First, we have before us A BLESSING BELONGING TO A PECULIAR PEOPLE. “You are blessed of the Lord.” “You.” Who are these distinguished persons? We would reply, first, that they are a people whom God has blessed because He willed to do so. He has given us no other reason as the first cause of their being blessed but the fact that He is good and that He is Sovereign in the distribution of His Grace. If you search to the very bottom of things you hear a voice proclaiming these words, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

If you go back to the first spring and wellhead of all blessing, you shall not find the merits of man as the guardian of the fountain, nor the will of man as the digger of the well—but you shall find there written, “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The will of God, alone, is the source of the rich, eternal, saving blessing which abounds towards the Lord’s elect! If you are blessed of the Lord who made Heaven and earth, you are not a people who claim to have deserved His favor—you abhor all boasting in self and you magnify Divine mercy. Free Grace is the Shibboleth of the true saints—those who cannot speak out upon that point may well question their lineage!

If you talk of deserving, you belong to another race—you are of the seed of Hagar and belong to Sinai, in Arabia, and therefore you are under the Law and under the curse. No blessing comes to sinners by the way of the Law, but the very reverse. They only shall participate in this blessing who receive it by promise and by covenant, being the seed of Abraham by promise, even as Isaac was, who was born not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Glory, then, be to God at the very outset of our meditations, that He has been pleased to set apart unto Himself a people, elect according to His own eternal purpose in Christ Jesus! Of them and only of them has He said, “You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth.” This is true doctrine according to the Scriptures and the regenerate feel the truth of it confirmed in their own experience.

Furthermore, they are a people to whom this first will of God to bless them has been certified by countless acts of indisputable love. You who trust that you are blessed of the Lord remember how God’s blessing has come to you already. It waited for you before you were born—yes, it waited for you before this world was fashioned—from everlasting you were ordained to this benediction! The Covenant of Grace was made on your behalf with all its sacred stipulations and its immutable seals, and immeasurable promises of love. What says the Apostle in the first chapter of Ephesians, verses three and four?—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.”

For you, in the fullness of time, Jesus came to tabernacle among men. Who shall doubt that you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, since for you the Son of God laid aside His royalties to become the Son of Man? Union with you in your nature was clear evidence that the heart of Christ was with you. Gethsemane and Calvary speak volumes concerning the reality of the blessings which God has given to His chosen, for there they were loved to the death and redeemed by blood. An Incarnate God, a Mediator covered with bloody sweat, a Redeemer wounded and slain—what do you say about this? “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,” said the Apostle, and even so say we!

Nor was the gift of Jesus Christ’s dying, all, for Jesus’ living is still ours! His resurrection teems with the blessings of life and immortality. We are one with Him and He is forever our Head. And in Him, by virtue of His ascension, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and will dwell in us forever. Through His indwelling we have “an unction from the Holy One,” through which we “know all things,” being taught of God and led into all Truth according to the office of the gracious Comforter.

Meanwhile we are also raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, while all things are ours and we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. But, indeed, I am not about to make a catalog of those gifts which have already come to us—time would fail and ability would also be lacking—suffice it to hint at them to you, to remind you that if through Grace you have received Christ, you are, indeed, “blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth,” for 10,000 times 10,000 of the choicest gifts have been the seals and testimonials of your heavenly Father’s affection towards you.

But, Beloved, the peculiar people to whom this blessing comes are, after their conversion, known by their character. In due time Divine Grace works in them marks of their election—signs of the inward and spiritual Grace which the Holy Spirit has implanted. One sign is mentioned in the connection of our text—“He shall bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.” So then, if you fear the Lord, “you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth.” Now, to fear Him is not merely to tremble before Him, fearful lest He should destroy you. Such a fear as that has been found in the hearts of even the vilest of men! We suppose that neither Pharaoh nor Belshazzar was a stranger to that feeling.

But this is another fear—the humble worship of God, the sincere reverence of God—the sacred awe which is found even among the angels of Heaven. This holy fear is the holy admiration which trembles at the infinite majesty of the Most High—not out of slavish dread, but out of a childlike sense of insignificance—this is the sign of inward Grace. “Blessed is the man that fears always.” The fear of grieving One so loving, of doing anything that should dishonor the name of One so infinitely glorious—this is the correct fear. Have you that fear? Have you the fear that makes you confess your past sins—the fear that makes you dread going into such sin again—the fear that makes you mourn because you nailed the Savior to the tree? Do you have the fear that makes you tremble lest you should crucify the Lord afresh and put Him to an open shame?

This is not the fear which perfect love casts out, or the fear which has torment, but a sweet fear, as we have said before, which may be felt, even in Heaven itself where they sing, “Who would not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?” It was to such as these that a voice came out of the excellent Glory, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great” (Rev. 19:5). “Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, that delights greatly in His Commandments.” And it is very sweet to notice that this benediction is common to all God-fearing persons—“both small and great”—and the small are put first lest they should think they are forgotten.

I see many little children here this evening. Oh, if you fear God, if you pray to God, if you trust in Jesus and if your young hearts have been taught to love God, small as you are, you are the blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Jesus loves to receive children to His bosom as much, now, as ever He did when He lived upon earth! Come to Him by faith and He will bless you! There are here many young enquirers who have only just begun to pray and who are between hope and fear like newborn children whose lives tremble in the balances. To them it must be cheering to observe that the Lord blesses the “small” as well as the “great.” The Lord regards the contrite in spirit and He hears the groans of broken hearts—His delight is to bless the lowly in mind. Though Grace is small in you, yet He will not quench the smoking flax. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

And you poor in this world, you humble, you illiterate, you obscure, you sickly ones—you with little talent and slender opportunity for serving God—I pray you rejoice in the assurance of the text, for you are the blessed of the Lord if you walk before Him in holy fear! The eye that looks to God and trusts Him even when it cannot see Him, is a blessed eye. The heart that pines after God even when it cannot rejoice in Him is a blessed heart. And the hand that stretches itself out after God, saying, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him,” is still a blessed hand, even though for the moment it cannot lay hold upon the Word of promise. If you sigh and cry after God with a true heart, looking to Him in His own way, through Christ His Son, you are numbered with those that fear the Lord, who are blessed of Him whether they are small or great!

Now, all this is very sweet to those who fear God. To them it is peculiarly precious to know that they are blessed of the Lord because they know they deserve to have been cursed. A sense of wrath due to sin imparts a rare sweetness to the Divine favor. Did you ever hear the roar of Sinai’s thunder in your ears? If so, you will never forget it to your dying day! And even in eternity it will impart an additional melody to the music of the Cross. I would to God that some Christians were plowed a little more before they were sown, for I notice that the flimsiness and superficiality of the religion which is common now-a-days arises mainly from the lack of deep self-knowledge and solemn personal conviction that they were themselves utterly lost and ruined.

I fear many have made but poor students in the University of Theology because they were never well-grounded in the School of Repentance. I am astonished that we should live to hear from a Nonconformist pulpit that the Fall of man was a fiction! I boldly say that the religion of the man who could utter such a speech is a fiction beyond all question! What does he know about the things of God when he does not even know the things of man? Let him get back to his God in penitence and ask to be taught aright—for he who knows not the Fall of man does not know the uplifting by free Grace. If he knows not the disease, he is a wretched physician and is sure to mistake the remedy. He who has once known the curse, and smarted under it, loves the wine and oil of the blessing for by it his bleeding wounds were staunched.

The blessing of the Lord is as dew to the mown grass and as showers to the parched soil. It is life itself and the essence of Heaven. Moreover, the child of God knows the sweetness of the blessing because the effect of the curse is, in a measure, still upon him—not the judicial curse, for that was laid upon Christ and has gone forever—but the plague of his own heart. The remains of sin within often make him feel that it is a dreadful thing to have been a sinner, even though he is now pardoned and “accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, the Amalekites and Canaanites that still dwell in the land, what a nuisance they are! What “thorns in our eyes,” as Joshua calls them!

A strong expression indeed! They are worse than a thorn in the flesh. Sin is a thorn in the eye to the Believer. But to know that though I fight daily with corruptions and have to mourn an evil heart of unbelief, yet I am blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, for all that—is not that bliss? Oh, the sweetness of that word to a heart which has been sorely tempted! Besides, the child of God, in addition to what he feels within, is often called to suffer the curses of the world and the curses of Satan. If you are of the world, the world will love its own—but if you are not of the world, the world will hate you. And though at times, under misrepresentations, slanders and cruel accusations you will feel that you are shamefully entreated, this Truth of God will gloriously sustain you—“You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth.”

The bitterness of persecution is gone when this is realized. Your faithful soul learns to say, “Let them curse on if they will, let Balak go from mountain to mountain and kill his bullocks and his rams, and call upon Balaam to curse the people of God—yet surely there is no enchantment against Jacob nor divination against Israel. They may cast their spells and invoke the demons as they will, but if the Lord has blessed the people, blessed they are!” Blessed be God, if we have once received this benediction from our Great Father’s hand, all the maledictions of the Pope or the devil, or all the wicked men on earth shall not frighten our spirit! God’s blessing shall silence all!

Thus have I spoken upon the peculiar people chosen by Sovereign Grace receiving perpetual tokens of love; known by their character; all of them receiving the blessing, whether great or small, and all of them finding that blessing inexpressibly sweet.

II. Now, secondly, this is A BLESSING FROM A PECULIAR QUARTER. “You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth.” This is a blessing from one peculiarly related to us and therefore it is the more to be prized. We are glad to get a father’s blessing—let no man think little of it. A father’s curse might wither a man. If in any case it has been justly earned, I pity the poor wretch who wears it like the mark of Cain upon his soul—for him the sun has no smiling beams and the clouds no silver linings—the past no comfortable memories, the future no joyful prospects.

A mother’s blessing—how like the breath of cloudless morn—foretelling a day of peace! A brother’s blessing—how bright with sacred dew like that which gemmed old Hermon’s woods. The blessing of saintly men and holy women—who shall set a price upon it? Its merchandise is far above silver. In the olden times paternal benedictions were more thought of than they are now, and the change is not the fruit of greater wisdom. Verily, the blessing of a child of God I reckon to be a portion of my true wealth and I love you, Brothers and Sisters, for wishing me God-speed. Happy is the man whom good men love to bless!

But, ah, Beloved, if you are blessed of the Lord you have a more Divine benediction—you have the blessing which makes rich, indeed, true and lasting, potent and effectual—the blessing of your Father who is in Heaven! All other blessings are only blessings in proportion as they contain the essence of this blessing. God’s blessing is the sea and others are but drops. His is the sun and others are but sparks. The blessing spoken of comes not from an idol God. The Psalm leads us to make that observation. The gods of the heathen had mouths, but they spoke not. They had ears, but they heard not—any benediction from them would be a mockery! But the children of God are not blessed of Baal or Ashteroth, but of Jehovah, the self-existent Lord of All!

They receive no benediction from the priest who ministers at the shrine of a dumb god of silver, or a dead god of flour and water. Compared with the benediction of the Lord who made Heaven and earth, what a paltry thing is the blessing of a priest! Indeed, he is utterly impotent to bless. If he has any power, it lies in the opposite direction. He can curse the victims of his false teaching but he cannot benefit them! His pax vobiscum is not worth the time spent in the speaking it! His “plenary indulgence” defiles the paper it is written on. A priest’s blessing and a cockatrice’s egg are of equal value.

But to be blessed of Jehovah is a reality, as says the Psalmist, “Blessed is everyone that fears the Lord, that walks in His ways, for you shall eat the labor of your hands. Happy shall you be and it shall be well with you.” The benediction mentioned in our text comes from the Omnipotent Creator “who made Heaven and earth.” This intimates that the blessing is almighty in power. Have I the blessing of Him who said, “Let there be light,” and there was light? Then He can speak into my darkness and cheer the gloom of my despair! Does the blessing of Him who brought order out of chaos rest upon me? Then He can speak to the confusion of my circumstances and the turmoil of my desponding mind and charm all things into harmony! The blessing of Him who clothed the earth with beauty, piled the hills and dug the channels of the sea must have in it a fullness unrivalled!

A blessing from Him—how large it must be—how potent for all the purposes of Grace! A blessing from Him with whom there is no obstacle or difficulty—who shall be able to delay it or deprive me of it? The Lord who made Heaven and earth spoke, and it was done—He commanded and it stood fast! There was darkness but it fled before Him! There was confusion but it vanished at a glance of His eyes! And if God has blessed you, Christian, whatever stands in your way shall disappear before the benediction of your God. If He blesses, poverty cannot starve you, sickness cannot kill you, toil cannot wear you out, sorrow cannot consume you, life cannot allure you, death cannot slay you, Hell cannot enclose you!

If He blesses, “neither things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature,” can have power to harm you! If all the legions of Hell were armed and stood in your way and all were furious to destroy, yet in the name of God you could defy them, for His benediction would be both shield and spear to you! Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. It is a blessing from the All-Wise One “who made Heaven and earth.”

Do not forget that the making of Heaven and earth is not merely a display of power, but of infinite wisdom! Think of all the skill which has guided the stars in their courses and of the wonderful wisdom which has created all things that are and has sustained them in their various spheres. Now, the Lord who blesses you, O heir of Heaven, is the infinitely Wise One! He knows the intricacies of your course and He will steer you through them. Though the channel of the river of your life flows close to yonder sandbar and then by the rock upon the other side; and though no earthly pilot can thread the mazes of that dangerous stream, yet He who knows all things has blessed you and with His hand upon the helm of your vessel He will bring you safe into the haven.

Therefore do not fear. You are not blessed of an erring creature, nor of a man like yourself—you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Is there any searching of His understanding? Has He not balanced the clouds in judgment? Has He not in wisdom laid the cornerstone of the universe? Why then, do you say, “My circumstances have been overlooked by Him and the problem of my case will be too difficult for Him to solve”? Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, for you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, whose Infallible counsels shall conduct your affairs to a blessed issue! Let this console you—you are blessed of Him who made you, and therefore knows how to anoint every wheel of your inner workmanship with the sacred oil of His Grace.

Take that thought into your spirit, too—He made Heaven and earth and therefore you are never out of His domain. We read of Him that He has a desire to the work of His own hands. He has made you and He will not leave you. Do you leave your children? Do you forget your offspring? Have you not heard that a woman may forget and may fail to have compassion upon the suckling of her own breast but God cannot and will not forget you? He will be mindful of you, for as man and especially as regenerated man, you are one of the noblest works of His hands. I know not how to speak upon so great a text as this, but I know how to drink its sweetness down into my very soul and to feel that, being blessed of God, all other things matter not!

Sick and sorry, or well and rejoicing—there is not a pin to choose so long as we are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Rich or poor, famous or despised, a throne or a martyr’s stake, a palace or a dungeon—truly, there is not the turn of a hair between them if we are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! If this sweet blessing could fall upon a soul in Hell it would be a Heaven to it, and could the blessing of the Lord that made Heaven and earth be taken away from the saints in Heaven, Heaven would be a Hell to them! Our heart can sing with the Psalmist—

*“Let the ungodly race advance,  
And boast of all their store.  
The Lord is my inheritance,  
My soul can wish no more.”*

The blessing of the Lord that made Heaven and earth is all in all. III. Let us turn to the third word, which is this—IT IS A BENEDICTION WITH A PECULIAR DATE for it is in the present tense. The preceding verses spoke of the past and the future. “The Lord has been mindful of us, He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron.” These are blessed “wills.” “He will bless them that fear Him, both small and great. The Lord shall increase you more and more, both you and your children.” These are all in the future but you know the Proverb says a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!

Now, those future blessings, those birds in the bush—I know not what they are worth, for they are boundless in preciousness. But here is a bird in the hand, “You are blessed of the Lord.” Oh, the value of that! You are at this moment blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth. This verb is in the present tense, and, indeed, it may be said to be in all the tenses put together—in a tense that is not a tense, a time that has no time but lasts on forevermore—till time shall be no more. This blessing embraces all circumstances! You are laid low and pining away with consumption but, “You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth.”

You are smitten down in the very heyday of your usefulness and laid aside but, “You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth.” You had your oxen and your cattle seized and now you are, like Job, a penniless beggar, fit to sit on a dunghill, but, “You are blessed of the Lord.” Your enemy has set his foot upon your neck and he swears that he will make a speedy end of you, but, “You are blessed of the Lord.” Like Jeremiah, you are shut up in the dark dungeon and you sink in the mire, and there seems to be no helper but, “You are blessed of the Lord.” Who shall say that John Bunyan in Bedford Jail was not “blessed of the Lord”? Who shall say that Rowland Taylor, when he went to be burnt on Hadleigh Heath, was not “blessed of the Lord” when his very face shone with sacred joy?

Ah, let me tell you that the worst places on earth bear the best evidence of the goodness of God to His people. God’s birds sing best in cages and like nightingales they sing best in the dark. And often, according to the old fable, their note is sweetest when the thorn pierces their breast. They are independent of outward circumstances except that the worse the circumstances, often the greater their joy! Glory be to God for this! They are “blessed of the Lord” that made Heaven and earth, let them be where they may and as they may. Though they seem cast out from God’s Presence and all His waves and billows go over them, yet if they fear the Lord they are “blessed of the Lord,” even then! Oh, that your faith may lay hold of this when you are very sorely exercised, for happy is the man whom God corrects, and blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord!

Observe that our text reaches to all time and beyond all time, because it runs thus—“You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth.” While I am on earth, this shall console me—“I am blessed of the Lord that made the earth” and He Himself has said of His servants, “Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Blessed shall be your basket and your store. Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out.”

When I have to go out of this earth into another world, this shall console me—“I am blessed of the Lord that made Heaven.” I shall still dwell in a place which my Father made. I am not going into a foreign country when I leave the warm precincts of this house of clay. I shall emigrate to the country where flowers never fade and winter never chills. This poor earth is little better than a penal settlement! It is a fair and beautiful and lovely earth to those who have eyes and taste with which to appreciate its scenery, but to a spiritual man it is just a smoke-dried tent of Kedar—a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, a casual ward for wayfarers, or very little better—a great morgue. “Woe’s me that I in Mesech am a sojourner so long.” We long to be away to our own fair country and see our Well-Beloved face to face!

Yet, for all that, God made this world though man has spoilt it as much as ever he can. And the God who made this world has blessed us so that wherever we go about in the world we should feel that we have a blessing that is suitable for every position in it—suitable for that lowly cot on the moor, suitable for that scant room in the dark alley—suitable for the couch of ease and suitable for the hard bed where pain racks every bone. The Lord that made earth, and who has a hand in it still, has blessed us!

And then it is the Lord that “made Heaven.” Why, these two words are meant to encompass all creation! They are intended to take in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, the east and the west, the north and the south, the rising and the setting sun, the sea and the dry land, the heights and the depths—they are meant to encompass all. Here we have the true way of making the best of both worlds. God’s blessing here and hereafter makes existence bliss! Oh be joyful! In whatever condition you are cast, you are blessed by God in that condition! And into whatever place you may come, you are blessed by God with mercies necessary for the place.

The heathens used to be afraid that though they might have the blessing of the god of the hills, if they went into the valleys they would not have his blessing there, for their god might not be the god of the valleys. But our God is the God of every place, and every scene, and every circumstance—and we are blessed of Him—glory be to His holy name!

IV. Now, fourthly and briefly, this is A BLESSING WITH A PECULIAR CERTAINTY. Scripture does not lie, or utter perhapses, and ifs, and buts. “You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth.” Oh you that fear God, this is a matter of fact—you daily and continually abide under a true and real blessing. Some blessings are vain words—the person who utters them is a hypocrite. Other blessings are sincere, but the person pronouncing them has no power to fulfill them. Such blessings are wells without water or barren fig trees bearing leaves but no fruit.

The Lord blesses not in word only, but in deed. His blessings are not futile wishes but Omnipotent acts. We may fail to obtain the benedictions which our friends invoke upon us, but God’s blessings are sure to all the seed. Failure and miscarriage never occur to the Lord our God. Many are the slips between cups and lips at this world’s banquet, but the chalice of Divine blessing shall surely reach the lip of the elect soul—

*“This is Your will, that in Your love  
We ever should abide  
And lo, we earth and Hell defy*

*To make Your counsel void.  
Not one of all the chosen race  
But shall to Heaven attain;  
Partake on earth the purposed Grace,  
And then with Jesus reign.”*

Now, Beloved, let us make sure of this blessing which is so sure. And how can we do so but by faith? We believe that God has blessed all those to whom He has given His dear Son—and He has given His dear Son to me if I believe in Jesus! As surely as I believe in Him, the blessing is mine. Grip it, Brothers and Sisters! Make sure of it. Let no man deceive you with vain words. In these times it is hard to find anybody who believes anything. Even the common history we learned at school is now suspected to be a myth. I do not think that you could, according to the modes of reasoning adopted in these skeptical days, be able to prove that you had either a father or a mother.

Nothing is certain now-a-days—nothing at all. The floods of doubt have carried all away. We are taught from the pulpit to doubt. The old Gospel was, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The new Gospel is, “He that doubts and is sprinkled shall be saved.” A sorry comedown for both the words. But, Beloved, we have not so learned the Gospel we have learned to believe and hope, still, to live by faith. Our beliefs are grounded too firmly to be shaken by fashionable quibbling. Do get a fast hold, my Brothers and Sisters! You say, “How can I?” Why, you can do it by believing the veracity of your God—believing that surely He who speaks can fulfill what He has said! And you can get your faith strengthened by experience.

Try your God—I mean, when He is trying you, trust Him and test His promise. Prove Him and see if He does not bless you. Fair-weather Christianity is all very well, but it is stormy-weather Christianity that proves a man to be truly a man of God. Can you trust God when the cupboard is bare? Can you rejoice in God when every nerve of your body is made to throb with pain? Can you stand beneath a burden that might have made Atlas bow down to the earth and feel that Divine strength is equal to all that and 10,000 times more? Could you fling yourself, like a Samson, unarmed, upon a thousand foes and strike them because the Lord was in you? If you can, you will have no trouble about this skepticism and these questions and doubts.

You will know the Lord’s Truth, for you have seen it. You will know His love, for you rejoice in it. You will know His faithfulness, for it is the pillow of your weary head. You will know His Immutability, for it is the anchor of your poor tempest-tossed boat. You will know that you are blessed of God that made Heaven and earth! May God grant us to know it by the witness of His Holy Spirit—to know it more and more by living more and more by faith, for only so shall we know it—to know it by despising everything else in comparison with it and relishing it and prizing it above all the delicacies that can be put upon the tables of worldlings. “Blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth”—may we be as assured of this as we are of our existence! Then shall we be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

V. The fifth point is THIS BLESSING INVOLVES A PECULIAR DUTY for, if God has blessed us, the succeeding duty is that we should bless Him. Note the 18th verse—“We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.” Come, then, Beloved, if God has blessed us let us bless Him! Let us answer to His benediction as the Alpine echo to the horn. I am afraid we are not very abundant in blessing and glorifying God.

What were you doing before you came here? What was your last word at home? Grumbling? Complaining? Very likely. Is this becoming in one whom God has blessed? What were your thoughts before you came here? Were you fully expecting something terrible to happen by-and-by? Mourning you know not why! Was that it? If so, is this a fit state of mind for one on whom the Divine benediction rests like a halo? What were your words on the road here? Let me guess again. Some silly chat? Some idle tale? Some frivolous joke? Is this worthy of your destiny? Is this worthy of an employment suitable for your rank?

Brothers and Sisters, we have had enough of all this! If your murmuring in times past has not sufficed, I am greatly in error. If you have not frightened yourself enough about things that have never happened, I am indeed mistaken. And if you have not wasted enough breath in idle talk, I am bereft of judgment. Now, from this day forth let us see if we cannot bless the Lord continually! Speak to one another, you children of God— speak well of His dear name who has so richly endowed you. Let us tell one another what God has done for us, saying, “Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul.”

“I don’t know what I can say,” says somebody. Did God ever do anything for you? Then begin to pray for His blessing at once, for without it you are a miserable creature. But if He has been favorable to you, tell your fainting Brethren how He has restored you! Tell your sinking friend how you felt a solid bottom beneath your feet when you went through deeper rivers than those which he is passing through. Tell others what you have tasted and handled—not what you do not know—for borrowed experience is poor stuff and savors of imposition. The Psalm says, “Praise Him from this time forth.” If the past has been marred by any other talk, now, “from this time,” bless the Lord! Wash your mouth of all complaining! Take the cup of gratitude to sweeten your soul and bless His name from this time forth.

What? Dumb till now? An heir of Heaven speechless? May a sight of God’s blessing open your mouth! From this time forth begin to bless Him. ‘Tis a good time in which to begin blessing God. This moment is a fair season for repentance. When was there a time that was unsuitable for adoring gratitude? And when was there an hour when it was not well to bless God? I beseech you, join me in praising Him!

Then the Psalmist resolves to praise the Lord “forevermore.” Our adoration of God is never to cease. As long as there is breath in our body let us praise Him who gives it to us. “Dum spiro spero,” said the heathen, “While I breathe, I hope.” But the Christian says, “Dum expiro spero”—“When I die, I will still hope in God.” While we exist we will adore—

*“My God, I’ll praise You while I live,  
And praise You when I die!  
And praise You when I rise again,  
And to eternity!”*

Repeat the joyous strain! Cease not day nor night! Nothing of worldly business deserves so much attention as to warrant our ceasing to bless and magnify the Lord in our hearts!

Now, I pray God that some here who have never received the Divine blessing after the tenor of the text, may be led to seek it—and you know His word—“Seek you the Lord while He may be found: call you upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Oh, that gracious word, “abundantly pardon!” How it meets our abundant sin! Oh, for His attracting love to operate upon sinners’ hearts! May He draw you to Himself for Christ’s sake and bless you, even you who up to now have slighted His mercy! He delights to be gracious! He loves to call them Beloved, that were not beloved, and to make them a people that were not a people. Hear that word, you humble and contrite, and never rest till the Lord Himself smiles upon you. Amen.

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THE RIGHT KEYNOTE FOR THE NEW YEAR  
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**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 1, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD.”  
Psalm 115:18.**

IT has been truly said that if the members of our churches were in a right condition of heart, the work of the pastor towards them would be no more difficult than that of a commanding officer to his troops. A general, or a captain has never to study eloquence—he has simply to give the word of command tersely and plainly—and himself to lead the way. So, if our hearts were right in the sight of God, we would not need illustrations to win attention or arguments to urge us on—we would only need to know what is the special duty of the hour and, helped by the Divine Spirit—we would, with alacrity, seek to perform it.

Well, now, let us hope that this is our condition tonight! God grant that it may be! Certainly it ought to be our condition in reference to the duty which is taught us in the text. I shall but, as it were, give the word of command in my Master’s name—and I trust that the Holy Spirit will be working in all our spirits, causing each one of us to say, “Ready, yes, ready, to bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord.”

You noticed, while we were reading the Psalm, that it contained a piece of cutting sarcasm upon the gods of the heathen which are unable to do anything for their worshippers. Albeit that they have the outward semblance of the organs of life and sense, yet in those organs there is neither life nor power. Their mouths cannot speak; their eyes cannot see; their ears cannot hear; their noses cannot smell; their hands cannot handle; their feet cannot walk. But our God is declared to be the living God who is in the heavens and who has done whatever He has pleased. Well, that being so, a living God should be worshipped by a living people in a living manner!

This is one of the rules of Christian worship which we should never forget. Let us come before the Lord, not as mere bodies, fancying that it is enough to put in an appearance in the place where prayer is known to be made, but let us bring our living selves, our souls, our hearts, into God’s worship—and whether it is in prayer, or in praise, or in the proclamation of His Truths, or in the listening to the Gospel message—let us do it with all our life! Let the praise be full of life! Let the prayer be full of life! Let the ministration of the Truth of God be the lively oracle of the living God! And let the ear, the heart’s ear, be all alive while we listen to the Gospel!

There is nothing more that is acceptable to God in the mere routine of Christian worship than there is in the turning of the windmills of the Tartars, when they put their prayers upon the mill and they revolve with the blowing of the wind! If true life is absent from our service, though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though we have the richest music, though we have everything that heart can devise to create a charm, yet it profits us nothing, and brings no Glory to God. “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” is a text which may be applied to dead services as well as to dead men. May the Lord, in mercy, send to some religious services a resurrection! May He be pleased to put a living heart and soul into them, for if there are not these, He will not accept a dead sacrifice at men’s hands! A living God must be worshipped in a living way by a living people!

In the context we see, also, that as it is true with the heathen’s idols, that, “they that make them are like unto them, so is everyone that trusts in them,” so ought it to be with us in reference to our God. A living God should have a living people and a blessing God should have a blessing people. He has blessed us with unspeakable favors. He is always blessing us! It is not possible for us to compute the amount of blessing which He is constantly bestowing upon us. Therefore, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” If He exalts you with His favor, take care that you exalt Him with your praise. If He enriches you with His blessings, bring your blessings and offer them at His feet, as the wise men brought their gold and frankincense and myrrh and laid them as tribute at the feet of the newborn King. Bless a blessing God! What can be more congruous? As the echo answers to the voice, so let our blessing of God answer to the blessing we have received from God, even as Paul puts it, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.”

This, then, is the work that is to occupy us tonight, and the work in which we shall continue, I trust, from this time forth and forevermore. Living unto the living God, time and eternity will be spent in blessing the blessing God.

Notice, in the text, which is clearly intended to excite us to praise, first, a mournful memory, suggested by the word “but.” Secondly, a happy resolution—“we will bless the Lord.” Thirdly, an appropriate commencement— “from this time forth.” And then, fourthly, an everlasting continuance— “and forevermore. Praise the Lord.”

I. First, then, there is in the text the trace of A MOURNFUL MEMORY. Read the preceding verse, without which we do not get the sense of this one to the fullest. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth.”

The mournful memory is that of those who, at one time praised the Lord with us, and exulted in His holy name during the past year, some have been numbered with the dead. There are gaps in our ranks, my Brothers and Sisters, which death has made during the past year. Some have been taken from us whom we could ill spare, as we thought, but they were, nevertheless, needed up above. He who bought them had a better right to them than we had and His prayers prevailed over ours, as they always should. We said, “Father, we will that they whom You have given us be with us where we are.” But Jesus prayed, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am.” And they have gone. He had the best right to them and we can only say, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seems good to Him.” But, as far as this world is concerned, they who have been taken from us do not praise the Lord, save that, being dead, they speak by the recollection of their holy lives. And their memory is sweet, like incense that has been burned, and leaves a perfume behind. Save for this, “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.”

I know that in Heaven they are praising Him! They have been added to the orchestra above and have helped to make it complete. Fresh songsters are there before the everlasting Throne of God, but here they cannot swell our praises. Their bodies sleep beneath the green sward in the silence of the tomb. As I look round the different parts of the Tabernacle— my eyes being better able to distinguish the gaps than some of yours are because I rather know something of all, and each of you knows but a part of this great congregation—as I look around, I notice where sat one whose eyes were full of glances of delight whenever the name of Jesus was mentioned. I have heard him speak in his Master’s praise most sweetly and yet tearfully, but I shall never hear him here again. I looked into his tomb but a few days ago. He has gone down into silence so far as his body is concerned.

There was another dear worker who was always here, I might say that he was always everywhere where there was anything to be done for Christ! And we went to his grave, also, and we laid him in the silent tomb. During the year I suppose some 70 or 80 of our number have gone over to the majority—I mean, 70 or 80 of those who were actually members of the Church, besides those who, I trust, loved the Lord, although they had not confessed His name in Baptism and united with His people in Church fellowship. They have gone over to the great host above—and there are so many the fewer here. Well, what doe this say to us? I will not imitate Dr. Watts, and say—

*“Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound!”*  
I think we hear too many doleful sounds from the tombs. But I hear a lively, earnest sound, and it says, “Brothers and Sisters, keep up the song of praise unto the Lord! Do not let the music falter. Our voices are gone from among you—sing, therefore, each of you, the more sweetly and loudly to make up for our absence from the earthly choir.”

Now that so many saints have gone Home, there are so many the fewer on earth to praise the Lord. O you who have recently come into the Church, you who have been baptized for the dead to fill up the gaps in our ranks, be earnest, with your loud hosannas, to bless and magnify the name of the Lord! Brethren, let us take a blessed revenge on Death, and if he takes from our numbers, let us, as God helps us, increase the real efficiency of the Church by each of us endeavoring to become double what we formerly were in the service of our Master! O Death, you have struck down a songster who used to sing at my side, but my voice shall be louder than before! I will make music for us both and there shall yet come another to fill his place! And so there shall be three songs instead of two—and God shall be a gainer on earth and a gainer in Heaven by the loss which death seemed to cause to Christ’s Church! They are going, one after another, my Brothers and Sisters. They are gathering homeward one by one. The most useful, the most mighty in prayer, the most holy, the very pillars and strength of the Church are going and, as a Brother said the other day, “When so many good ones are going, what can we do better than pack up and go with them?” As each one goes, we feel almost inclined to say what the disciples said concerning Lazarus, “If he sleeps, he shall do well.” And to add, with Thomas, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

But I am of another mind and I say, “No, if there are so many going, let us ask to be allowed to stay, for this great fight has to be fought out somehow and, if some of the troops have fought the good fight, and exchanged the sword and shield for the palm branch and the harp, let us who are left pray with all our might unto the Lord God of Hosts to strengthen us in this day of battle, that we may not go till we have finished our part of the fight and have been the means of calling others to prolong the blessed struggle by which victory shall be given to the name of Christ.”

By the thought, then, of the many dead who cannot any longer praise God among us, let us be stimulated to bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!

There comes up in my mind, however, another reflection, that, as others are gone, we, ourselves, shall also go soon. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” O Brothers, if we are called to preach, it is only for a little while! We have not an indefinite period in which to be wise to win souls. Our work must be done soon or it will never be done! O teachers, you must win your children for Christ soon, for you are not to live a thousand years to go on seeking the little ones! They must be brought to Jesus soon or they will not be brought by you, for you will have passed away! O all you Christian people who love your Lord, be busy in those sacred works which can only be performed on earth, for angels cannot clothe the naked or feed the hungry! No angel can be a Dorcas to make garments for the poor. These things are for this life—these modes of praising God are only for time—there are others for eternity. These are for this life and to these we have to attend as long as we are here.

To keep the Church of God on earth, the Church militant, in good marching order, and good working condition, and so to glorify God here is what we must do now, and do it soon, for, “the night comes when no man can work.” I wish we all felt more that we are dying men. The sound of the chariot wheels of eternity should make us quicken our pace. If you could often look through the heavenly telescope and see the Judgment Seat, the Great White Throne in the heavens, and the assembled multitude, and yourself rendering up your books of account to the last great Examiner, some of you would live far differently than you do! God help us to do so and, by the recollection of this, “but,” though it comes over us like a cloud, tonight, let us be quickened into the immediate and joyous work of blessing and magnifying the Most High!

II. Let us now go to our second point which is this—A HAPPY RESOLUTION. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord.”

“We will bless the Lord,” for it seems to us to be the very thing for which we were created. This is the flower of our being! We are never happier, surely, never more developing what God has put into us by His Grace, than when we are praising and blessing Him.

We will bless the Lord by our songs . They shall be more frequent than they have been. Brothers and Sisters, do you sing as much as you might? Do you sing at work and do you sing in the household, and do you sing on your beds? I have known some who have managed to live always singing. It was my joy to know an old man, a very old man, who was famous in the village where he lived because, as he walked the streets, he was always humming a little bit of a hymn. He was a grand old Methodist of the grand old days—and he had always some glorious hymn that he would go along tooting as he went about the streets! And he sang himself to bed and sang himself to sleep, and, I was going to say, sang himself awake—he was scarcely awake before he began to sing again. It was all singing with him!

Now, you know how the worldlings sing. You cannot be quiet in your beds, at night, because of the noise they make in the streets. Let us be as ready with the songs of Zion as they are with the songs of Gomorrah! Let us magnify the Lord with our songs far oftener than we have done.

Then, let us magnify the Lord in our daily talk and conversation while we speak about Him. Never speak badly of His name. Some of you do. There is sometimes a grumbling at His Providences. There is a fretting at the trials He sends. There is a complaining about all sorts of things. But you who love Him, begin, from this night, to bless Him by speaking well of His name. Bless Him for everything! Bless Him for the bitters; bless Him for the cold; bless Him for poverty and sickness. “That is a hard thing to do,” you say. Yes, but it is a sweet thing to do—it will be as comforting to yourself as it will be glorifying to God!

Begin to praise Him in the tone of your spirit. May God the blessed Comforter help you to do it by a calm, equable frame of mind, by a Divine placidity of temper, by a complete subjection of the will to Him so that you shall not feel it to be subjection, but find it to be your delight that the Lord should do with you whatever pleases Him! It is bliss to praise God so that our very thoughts praise Him, not by effort, but as flowers pour out their perfume, so that our inmost soul praises Him, just as the birds sing, not as if it were a task, but because it cannot help it! Was it not made to sing? And so it sits on the bare bough, before the spring has yet developed the green leaf and opening bud, and it sings even amid the frost and snow—and wakes us up in the spring morning with its hymn of praise to its Creator. “Its,” I said, but I mean a thousand of them—winged choristers praising and blessing God, not because they are told that they ought to do so—but because it is their intense delight to pour out their music! Oh, that we were little birds, made always to sing God’s praise! Oh, that we were drops of dew, forever sparkling in the light of God’s love!

I like to look at the lilies, sometimes, and think how they worship God. They never study a sermon, or compose a hymn, or weave a rhyme, or even think—but they serve God by standing still and showing themselves and breathing out their sweet perfume to the winds! Oh, to be full of God, till, at last, you bless Him even by existing! Till life becomes a Psalm and even breathing becomes a hymn of praise unto the Most High in whom we live, and move, and have our being! Blessed be His name! We will bless the Lord from this time forth, in some such way as that, as He shall help us!

For, dear Brothers and Sisters, we may well bless the Lord because we are alive. That, “but,” suggests that since others have gone, we should bless Him that we live. I do not know whether I would not as soon have been in Heaven as here, but, still, to abide in the flesh for a while may be more necessary for some and, therefore, I am glad to be alive. And some of you with your children about you, with many dependent upon you, should thank God that while you are needed here you are spared here—and you should thank Him who has kept you. You might have been killed in some accident. You might have been struck down, as many have been this year, by contagious disease. You might have been in such pain, tonight, that death would have seemed a relief to you. Bless the Lord that it is not so. Bless Him that you live. O God, our Creator and Preserver, we will, from this time forth, bless You that we are alive!

Then bless God because of spiritual life, for there is something in that calling for devout gratitude, for to live, and yet not to be alive spiritually, is to be a walking corpse, an animated dunghill, a Lazarus who by this time stinks, and yet is not in his grave! It is a horrible thing to be going about in this world with eyes that do not see God, and with ears that never hear His voice when He is speaking everywhere, and with a heart that never responds to His Divine love. Better not to be, than to be and yet not know the greatest and best of Beings. Let us bless God that He has quickened us into spiritual life, for it was not so with some of you a long while ago.

No, it is but a few months since some of you were made alive. And this new year may remind you of some former new years, and of how they were spent, and into what condition you brought yourselves! O Lord, our state of spiritual death does not bear thinking of, except we wet the page of memory with many tears! Blessed be Your name, You have delivered us from the bondage of corruption and brought us into newness of life! Therefore will we bless You from this time forth and forevermore!

And let us bless the Lord because, according to the Psalm,

 we have been blessed of Him. Read, again, the 12th verse, “The Lord has been mindful of us: He will bless us.” Now, it is not only according to the Psalm, but it is also a matter of fact. “The Lord has been mindful of us.” I do not know your histories, dear Friends, as you know them, but I would like you to pull out your pocketbooks and your diaries, and just look down them. How many times has the Lord been mindful of you during the past year? I could tell of many interpositions of His Divine love on my behalf, but I will not do so at this time. I will bless His name in secret for His loving kindness towards His unworthy servant.

A good old woman used to hear people speak about their Ebenezers, or stones of help, in remembrance of God’s mercy, but she said that when she looked back on hers, she thought she was looking back on a wall. They were set so closely together that they seemed to make a wall on the right hand and on the left of all her pathway. Well, that is just like mine. I am such a debtor to Divine Mercy that if I could but pay half a farthing in the pound, I should need to give fifty million times more than I am, or ever hope to be worth! Oh, what I owe Him!

Rutherford speaks somewhere of his soul going right down in the stream of God’s love, not floating in it, but sinking, foundering, going down till mighty love went over the masthead of his soul. And such do I feel that our gratitude ought to be. The ocean of God’s love rises above us so as altogether to swallow us up. The Lord has done such great things for us that if we do not bless Him, the very stones we walk on in the streets might cry out against us, and every beam in the wall might groan in the night to think that it sheltered such an ungrateful sleeper! Oh, the mercy, the forgiving mercy, the abounding mercy, the ceaseless mercy of the living God! What tongue can ever tell it? Surely the poet did not strain metaphors too much, or use hyperboles, or push them too far, when he said—

*“But, oh, eternity’s too short  
To utter half Your praise!”*

Again, we ought to praise the Lord, according to the Psalm, because He will bless us. You must have noticed that the Psalmist expressed that idea several times in different forms—“He has been mindful of us: He will bless us.” This is a very sweet duty to which I would exhort you, to bless the Lord in the prospect of what He is going to do. Come, let us weave songs out of tomorrows! We will not boast of them, but we will bless God for them. Let us praise Him for all the love and kindness that is going to be with us through all the year that is just beginning! Troubles will come, but the Lord will deliver the godly out of them all! Tribulation will be our portion, but in Christ we shall have peace! Perhaps we shall go Home this year—if we are to do so, let it not cause us even so much as one single fear, but let us put that into the song and bless the Lord for gates of pearl and harps of gold—so soon to be the heritage of His unworthy children!

III. Now I must be brief on the other points, but I want to delay a minute or two on the third head, which is AN APPROPRIATE COMMENCEMENT—“From this time forth.”

When is the time to begin to praise God? Now, Brothers and Sisters, now—“From this time forth.” You see, it was just then that the heathen were saying, “Where is their God?” When God is blasphemed by others, then let His people praise Him! Whenever you hear anything said against God, any note of blasphemy or skepticism, then say, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth.” Always feel as if you were called upon to make some recompense to the blessed name for the dishonor which the adversary has done to it. I think there will be less swearing in the world if we always do that, for the devil will tell his children to leave off when he finds that every time they curse, we bless God all the more. Whenever you hear that a bad book has come out—whenever you hear that some scientific man has been saying something that will mislead the unwary, say, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth. We will have a new song because of that. We will make some kind of amends to God’s great name because of all the calumny that is cast upon it.”

So let us do it whenever we have a sense of mercy. He has been mindful of us, therefore, from this time forth, we will praise His name. Do you feel as if He had done great things for you, of which you are glad? Is your heart leaping, tonight because of some special mercy? Then let this be your sweet resolve, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth.”

I think that we ought to praise the Lord from the first moment in which we know our sins are forgiven, the first moment in which we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and then from every period of spiritual enjoyment. You who are about to be baptized may well say, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth, from the time when we come forward to confess our faith in Jesus, when we put on Christ by public profession of allegiance to Him.” From every season of coming to the Communion Table, from every hallowed night of wrestling prayer, from every time you climb the Mountain of Transfiguration and behold your Master’s Glory, yes, and from every Gethsemane’s night, when you strive almost in vain to watch with Him one hour—even then, say, “From this time forth we will bless Him.”

I am sure that I may claim that the beginning of another year is a good time to begin blessing the Lord. For the mercies of another year, the forgiveness of another year, the provision, the instruction, the guidance, the supplies of another year, for the mercies of the year on which we enter with good heart of hope, for all our fears which have been averted, for all our hopes which have been fulfilled, for all that we have learned, for all that we have experienced, let us carry out this happy resolution that, from this time forth, we will bless the Lord!

Oh, how I wish that I could put this resolution into the hearts of some people whom I know! I hope they are Christians, but, you know, they were born on a bleak day and they always speak with lips of frost. You are never many minutes with them but you hear grievous complaining. Dear Brother, how would it do for you to say, “From this time forth I will bless the Lord”? We know some who, like myself, are depressed by this horrible wintry weather. We get to feel all our bones aching and we are very apt, when we are full of rheumatism, to begin to talk about it. Come, my Sister. Come, my Brother, let us have done with that theme, and say, “From this time forth we will bless the Lord!”

I know the style of talk that is very frequent—“Never was there such a dull time for trade. Business is worse than I ever knew it. Everything is going to the bad. There are wars and rumors of wars, and the world is coming to an end, and I do not know what is not going to happen.” Well, Brother, if you like that strain, you must keep on at it, but as for me, and you, too—I really think that it would be better if we were both to say— “From this time forth we will bless the Lord.” We have strummed away long enough on that sackbut—let us begin to play on the psaltery and the harp of a solemn sound! We have too long been singing—

*“Lord, what a wretched land is this,  
That yields us no supply!  
No cheering fruits, no wholesome trees,  
Nor streams of living joy.  
But pricking thorns through all the ground, And mortal poisons grow;  
And all the rivers that are found  
With dangerous waters flow.”*

Let us go on to the next verse and sing—  
*“Yet the dear path to Your abode  
Lies through this horrid land.  
Lord, we would keep the heavenly road,  
And run at Your command!”*

Let us begin to sing of the path, and the Guide, and the Home to which we are going! We are a day’s march nearer Home, a year’s march nearer Home, so from this time forth let us bless the Lord!

IV. And then comes, lastly, AN EVERLASTING CONTINUANCE—“We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.”  
I was born in a county where there were many old-fashioned people and I am old-fashioned, myself. Whenever I read my Bible and find that it says, “everlasting,” or, “forevermore,” I believe that it means what it says. Of course, I have lived in a world in which I am informed that it does not mean anything of the kind—that it means a very short period—or a period longer or shorter according as circumstances may happen! I am afraid I shall never learn this new lingo. I have no intention of trying to learn it, either, so I am sure that I never shall be able to understand things the wrong way upwards, as the wise men now do. “Everlasting” will be everlasting with me forever and ever, I can tell you, and it will find me, at any rate, a believer in eternity as being that which never has an end! I believe that those who think differently will have to come round to the opinion that I have found in the Word of God. At any rate, if we are to agree, they will have to do so, for I shall never come round to their view.  
Now, then, the expression, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore,” means that our praise shall have no end to it, “Forevermore,” means eternity, I believe, and I pray God that we may make it to mean eternity in our praise “from this time forth and forevermore.” Falling from Grace shall not come in to make us cease praising and blessing the Lord! We began to praise Him, not in the strength of nature, but in the strength of Grace—and that strength will not exhaust itself, for it will be renewed day by day—so that we shall be able to bless the Lord forevermore.  
Death itself shall not stop us from blessing God! No, it shall but increase the choir and sweeten the harmony! We shall love the Lord more and praise Him better when death shall have divested us of these tongues which now are impediments to the highest praise—and shall have given us the power to speak without lips and tongues in a nobler language before the Throne of God—  
*“My God, I’ll praise You while I live,  
And praise You when I die,  
And praise You when I rise again,  
And to eternity.”*  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, if we are in the right state of heart, there

 is not a time when we could leave of blessing the Lord. When shall we cease to bless Him? When He leaves off blessing us? That will never be! When we leave off being in debt to Him? That can never be! When He ceases to be worthy of blessing? That cannot be! Or when the life of Divine Grace within us ceases to recognize His blessedness? That, also, cannot be, for it shall be in us “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” Leave off praising Him? O Brothers, Sisters, never, never, never, not even for the time in which a clock might tick once! Go on praising Him if He shall take you up to the bed of sickness—if every limb shall be a mass of pain, if every nerve shall be a highway for a crowd of pains to travel on— yet still go on blessing and praising and magnifying Him, for this is His due! When we have praised Him best and most, we have not given Him what He deserves! Let us fill this House of Prayer with our praise and thanksgiving tonight! The Romanist sets his incense on fire and fills the whole place with its smoke. Oh, let there go up to God from our grateful hearts a cloud of the smoke of praise unto His blessed name! Blessed be the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, from this time forth and forevermore!  
If any man cannot join in that praise, let him remember that he is not fit to live, nor fit to die—for to die without praising God and to rise again— would be to remain in a state in which he could not possibly enter Heaven, since the one occupation of Heaven is magnifying and blessing and praising the Lord forever and forever! Let such an one seek the Lord, now! Let him trust in the Lord Jesus Christ! Then he shall be saved and he will be able to join us in saying, “We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. **PSALM 115.**

Verses 1-3. Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Your name give Glory, for Your mercy, and for Your Truth’s sake. Why should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: He has done whatever He has pleased. It was very natural that the heathen should say, “Where is their God? because they had no outward emblem, no visible image, no tangible token—whereas the heathen had their many gods, such as they were, made of wood and stone, so that they asked, “Where is their God?” I think that when that question is suggested, it is a good sign, for it proves the purity of the faith which has cleansed itself from outward symbolism. May men often have to ask of us, “Where is their God?”

But I fear that the people of Israel were brought into so low a state, at times, that this question was also asked in scorn and derision, “Where is now their God?” “He was with them when they came out of Egypt. He was with them when they captured Canaan. He has been with them in many a terrible battle, turning to flight the armies of the aliens, but where is now their God?” It is a cutting question under such circumstances. It was so with the Psalmist when be said, “As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is your God?” “But our God is in the heavens where their gods never were. He has done whatever He has pleased.” The gods of the heathen have done nothing— they cannot do anything.

4-7. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. It is a grim piece of sarcasm which the Psalmist here aims at the idol gods. I do not know, sometimes, whether this is not all that superstition deserves of us—to be utterly laughed at and put to scorn. The spirit of Elijah is not altogether the most Christlike, and yet even the Christian may well say to the priests of Baal, in derision and contempt, “Cry aloud, for he is a god.” What do they deserve who so degrade themselves as to worship things which their own hands have made—things which can be seen with the eyes and touched with the hand? Yet, even in this country we have thousands who call themselves Christians, who prostrate themselves before idols made in different forms and shapes—yes and say to a piece of bread that the baker made, “This is our god.” Well says the Psalmist—

8. They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusts in them. They are as doltish and as stupid, as blind and as deaf, and as ridiculous as the gods that they make, for no man was ever better than the god he worshipped!

9-11. O Israel, trust you in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. You that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield. There is real help in the living Jehovah, real protection in Him.

12. The LORD has been mindful of us: He will bless us. There is a New Year’s motto for you. It will go back through the old year, and forward into the new one—“The Lord has been mindful of us: He will bless us.” See how mindful He has been of us all through the past year in a thousand ways! Long before we have known our needs, He has supplied them. He has delivered us from dangers of which we never knew and led us into mercies of which we never dreamed!

12, 13. He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great. Great blessings for small people, and not small blessings for those whom He makes great in Israel.

14, 15. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children. You are blessed of the LORD which made Heaven and earth. This is the Creator’s blessing, therefore a real one. Many of you have had the new creation worked in you—you shall live to see new heavens and a new earth!

16. The Heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth has He given to the children of men. And they seem as if they meant to keep it, too. The sad thing is that they get the earth into their hearts and so they miss the blessing which the Lord intended them to receive from His gift of it.

17. The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. As far as this world is concerned, no note is heard from the grave.  
18. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD. So let us do tonight. Let us have an extra Psalm of praise to the Lord who has brought us safely through another year!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #240 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

PRAYER ANSWERED, LOVE NOURISHED  
NO. 240

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 27, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplication.” Psalm 116:1.**

IN the Christian pilgrimage it is well for the most part to be looking forward. Whether it is for hope, for joy, for consolation, or for the inspiring of our love, the future, after all, must be the grand object of the eye of faith. Looking into the future we see sin cast out, the body of sin and death destroyed, the soul made perfect and fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. And looking further yet, the Believer’s soul can see Death’s river passed, the gloomy stream forded. He can behold the hills of light on which stand the Celestial City. He sees himself enter within the pearly gates, hailed as more than a conqueror—crowned by the hand of Christ, embraced in the arms of Jesus, glorified with Him, made to sit together with Him on His Throne, even as He has overcome and has sat down with the Father upon His Throne.

The sight of the future may well relieve the darkness of the past. The hopes of the world to come may banish all the doubts of the present. Hush, my fears! This world is but a narrow span and you shall soon have passed it. Hush, hush, my doubts! Death is but a narrow stream and you shall soon have forded it. Time, how short—eternity, how long! Death, how brief—immortality, how endless—

*“Oh the transporting, rapturous scene  
That rises to my sight!  
Sweet fields arrayed in living green,  
And rivers of delight.  
Filled with delight my raptured soul  
Would here no longer stay,  
Though Jordan’s waves around me roll, Fearless I’d launch away.”*

Yet nevertheless the Christian may do well sometimes to look backward—he may look back to the hole of the pit and the miry clay from where he was dug—the retrospect will help him to be humble, it will urge him to be faithful. He may look back with satisfaction to the glorious hour when first he saw the Lord, when spiritual life for the first time quickened his dead soul. Then he may look back through all the changes of his life to his troubles and his joys, to his Pisgahs and to his Engedis, to the land of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar. He must not keep his eye always backward, for the fairest scene lies beyond—it will not benefit him to be always considering the past—for the future is more glorious by far. But nevertheless at times a retrospect may be as useful as a prospect. And

memory may be as good a teacher as even faith itself.

This morning I bid you stand upon the hilltop of your present experience and look back upon the past and find therein motives for love to God. And may the Holy Spirit so help me in preaching and you in hearing, that your love may be inflamed and that you may retire from this hall, declaring in the language of the Psalmist, “I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplication.”

The particular objects which you are now to look back upon are the manifold and manifest answers to prayer which God has given you. I want you now to take up a book which you ought often to read, the book of remembrance which God has written in your heart of His great goodness and continued mercies. And I want you to turn to that golden page wherein are recorded the instances of God’s grace in having listened to your voice and having answered your supplications. I shall give you seven reflections, each of which shall stir up your hearts to love our God whose memorial is that He hears and answers prayers.

I. And the first thing I would have you remember is, YOUR OWN PRAYERS. If you look at them with an honest eye, you will be struck with wonder that ever God should have heard them. There may be some men who think their prayers worthy of acceptance—I dare say the Pharisee did. But all such men shall find that however worthy they may esteem their prayers, God will not answer them at all. The true Christian in looking back weeps over his prayers and if he could retrace his steps he would desire to pray better, for he sees that all his attempts at prayer in the past have been rather blundering attempts than actual successes.

Look back now, Christian, upon your prayers and remember what cold things they have been. You have been on your knees in the closet and there you ought to have wrestled as Jacob did, but instead of that your hands have fallen down and you have forgotten to strive with God. Your desires have been but faint and they have been expressed in such sorry language that the desire itself seemed to freeze upon the lips that uttered it. And yet, strange to say, God has heard those cold prayers and has answered them too, though they have been such that we have come out of our closets and have wept over them. At other times our hearts have been broken, because we felt as if we could not feel and our only prayer was, “God forgive us that we cannot pray.” Yet, notwithstanding, God has heard this inward groaning of spirit. The feeble prayer which we ourselves despised and which we thought would have died at the gate of mercy, has been nursed and nurtured and fostered and accepted and it has come back to us a full grown blessing, bearing mercy in both its hands.

Then again, Believer, how infrequent and few are your prayers and yet how numerous and how great have God’s blessings been. You have prayed in times of difficulty very earnestly, but when God has delivered you, where was your former fervency? In the day of trouble you besieged His Throne with all your might and in the hour of your prosperity, you could not wholly cease from supplication, but oh, how faint was the prayer compared with that which was wrung out of your soul by the rough hand of your agony. Yet, notwithstanding that, though you have ceased to pray as you once did, God has not ceased to bless. When you have forgotten your closet, He has not forgotten your house, nor your heart. When you have neglected the Mercy Seat, God has not left it empty, but the bright light of the Shekinah has always been visible between the wings of the cherubim.

Oh, I marvel that the Lord should regard those intermittent spasms of importunity which come and go with our necessities! Oh, what a God is He that He should hear the prayers of men who come to Him when they have wants, but who neglect Him when they have received a mercy—who approach Him when they are forced to come, but who almost forget to go to Him when mercies are plentiful and sorrows are few.

Look at your prayers, again, in another aspect. How unbelieving have they often been! You and I have gone to the Mercy Seat and we have asked God to bless us, but we have not believed that He would do so. He has said, “whatsoever you ask in prayer, believe that you shall have it and you shall have it.” Oh, how I could smite myself this morning, when I think how on my knees I have doubted my God! What would you think of a man who came before you with a petition and said, “Sir, you have promised to give me such-and-such a thing if I asked for it. I ask for it, but I do not believe you will give it me.” You would say “Get you gone until you believe me better. I will give nothing to a man who doubts my word.” Often might the Lord have spurned us from His Mercy Seat, when we have come to him, not believing the very promises which we were pretending to plead.

How small, too, the faith of our most faithful prayers! When we believe the most, how little do we trust. How full of doubting is our heart, even when our faith has grown to its greatest extent! What Christian is there here who is not ashamed of himself for having so often doubted a God who never yet denied Himself, who was never once untrue, nor once unfaithful to His Word? Yet, strange to tell, God has heard our prayers. Though we believed not, He was faithful. He has said, “Poor Heart, your weakness makes you doubt Me, but My love compels Me to fulfill the promise, even though you doubt.” He has heard us in the day of our trouble. He has brought us sweet deliverance, even when we dishonored Him by trembling at His Mercy Seat.

I say again, look back upon your prayers and wonder that God should ever have heard them. Often, when we awake in the morning and find our house and family all secure and remember what a poor family prayer we uttered the night before, we must wonder the house was not burnt and all in it. And you in the Church, after you have been to the Prayer Meeting and prayed there and God has actually listened to you and multiplied the Church and blessed the minister, do you not say afterwards, “I wonder that He should have heard such poor prayers as those that were uttered at the Prayer Meeting?” I am sure, Beloved, we shall find much reason to love God, if we only think of those pitiful abortions of prayer, those unripe figs, those stringless bows, those headless arrows, which we call prayers

and which He has borne with in His longsuffering.

The fact is, that sincere prayer may often be very feeble to us, but it is always acceptable to God. It is like some of those one-pound notes, which they use in Scotland—dirty, ragged bits of paper—one would hardly look at them, one seems always glad to get rid of them for something that looks a little more like money. But still, when they are taken to the bank, they are always acknowledged and accepted as being genuine, however rotten and old they may be. So with our prayers—they are foul with unbelief, decayed with imbecility and worm-eaten with wandering thoughts. But nevertheless, God accepts them at Heaven’s own bank and gives us rich and ready blessings, in return for our supplications.

II. Again—I hope we shall be led to love God for having heard our prayers, if we consider THE GREAT VARIETY OF MERCIES WHICH WE HAVE ASKED IN PRAYER AND THE LONG LIST OF ANSWERS WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED. Now, Christian, again—be your own preacher. It is impossible for me to depict your experience as well as you can read it yourself. What multitudes of prayers have you and I put up from the first moment when we learned to pray! The first prayer was a prayer for ourselves. We asked that God would have mercy upon us and blot out our sin. He heard that. But when He had blotted out our sins like a cloud, then we had more prayers for ourselves. We have had to pray for sanctifying grace, for constraining and restraining grace. We have been led to ask for a fresh assurance of faith, for the comfortable application of the promise, for deliverance in the hour of temptation, for help in the time of duty and for succor in the day of trial.

We have been compelled to go to God for our soup, as constant beggars asking for everything. Bear witness, children of God, you have never been able to get anything for your souls elsewhere. All the bread your soul has eaten has come down from Heaven and all the water of which it has drunk has come out of that living Rock—Christ Jesus the Lord. Your soul has never grown rich in itself. It has always been a pensioner upon the daily bounty of God. And hence your prayers have had to ascend to Heaven for a range of spiritual mercies all but infinite. Your wants were innumerable and, therefore, the supplies have been innumerable and your prayers have been as varied as the mercies have been countless.

But it is not for your soul alone that you have pleaded, your body has had its cries. You have been poor and you have asked for food and raiment. How frequently have they been given to you. Not by miracles, it is true. The ravens do not bring you bread and meat, but bread and meat comes without the ravens which is a greater miracle still. It is true your raiment has waxed old and therefore you have not realized the miracle of the children of Israel in the wilderness, whose clothes never grew old. Nevertheless you have had a greater miracle, still, for you have had new ones when you wanted them. All your necessities have been provided for as they have arisen. How often have these necessities come upon you? So great have they been at times, that you have said, “Surely the Lord will forsake me and deliver me over. I shall not have my bread given me, nor shall my water be sure.” But up to now God has fed you. You are not starved yet and by the Grace of God you won’t be. You have been told many a time by unbelief that you would die in the workhouse. But you are out of it even now, though it seems as if a thousand miracles had been put together to keep you from it.

Then again—how often sickness has laid hold upon you and like Hezekiah, you have turned your face to the wall and cried, “Lord, spare Your servant and let him not go down to the grave in the midst of his days.” And here you are, the living, the living to praise God. Remember the fever and the cholera and all those other fierce diseases which have laid you low. Remember those prayers you uttered and those vows you made. Oh, do not you love the Lord because He has heard your voice and your supplication? How frequently, too, have you prayed for journeying mercies and He has protected you in the midst of accidents. You have asked for blessings in your going out and your coming in—blessings of the day and of the night—and of the sun and of the moon. And all these have been vouchsafed to you. Your prayers were innumerable. You asked for countless mercies and they have all been given.

Only look at yourself—are not you adorned and bejeweled with mercies as thickly as the sky with stars? Think how you have prayed for your family. When you first knew the Lord your husband feared Him not. But how you wrestled for your husband’s soul! And now the tear is in your eye while you see your husband sitting by your side in the House of God and remember, it is not many months ago since he would have been in the tavern. Your children, too, have through your prayers been brought to God. Mothers, you wrestled with God that your children might be God’s children and you have lived to see them converted. How great the mercy to see our offspring called in early youth. Oh, love the Lord, because in this respect, too, He has heard your voice and your supplication.

How often have you presented before God your business and He has helped you in that matter. How frequently have you laid your household sorrows before Him and He has delivered you in that case. And some of us can sing of blessings given to us in the service of God in His Church. We have lived to see the empty sanctuary crowded to the full, we have seen our largest attempts successful beyond our most sanguine hopes. We have prayed for sinners and seen them saved. We have asked for backsliders and have seen them restored. We have cried for a Pentecost and we have had it. And by God’s grace we are crying for it again and we shall have it once more. O minister, deacon, elder, member, father, mother, man of business, have you not indeed cause to say, “I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications?” I am afraid the very fact that God hears our prayers so constantly leads us to forget the greatness of His mercy. Let it not be so, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul and forget not all His benefits.” Let this today be brought to mind and let me raise a song to the God who has heard the voice of my supplication.  
III. Let us note again THE FREQUENCY OF HIS ANSWERS TO OUR

FREQUENT PRAYERS. If a beggar comes to your house and you give him alms, you will be greatly annoyed if within a month he shall come again. And if you then discover that he has made it a rule to wait upon you monthly for a contribution, you will say to him, “I gave you something once, but I did not mean to establish it as a rule.” Suppose, however, that the beggar should be so impudent and impertinent that he should say, “But I intend Sir, to wait upon you every morning and every evening.” Then you would say, “I intend to keep my gate locked that you shall not trouble me.” And suppose he should then look you in the face and add still more, “Sir, I intend waiting upon you every hour, nor can I promise that I won’t come to you sixty times in an hour. But I just vow and declare that as often as I want anything so often will I come to you—if I only have a wish I will come and tell it to you. The least thing and the greatest thing shall drive me to you. I will always be at the post of your door.” You would soon be tired of such importunity as that and wish the beggar anywhere, rather than that he should come and tease you so.

Yet remember, this is just what you have done to God and He has never complained of you for doing it. But rather He has complained of you the other way. He has said, “You have not called upon Me, O Jacob.” He has never murmured at the frequency of your prayers, but has complained that you have not come to Him enough. Every morning when you have risen, your cry has gone up to Him—again with the family you have cried to the God of Jacob. At eventide you have gathered together and have prayed to Him and whenever you have a trial, or a want, or a doubt, or a fear, you have, if you have done rightly, sped away swiftly to His Throne and told Him all. Speak now, Saint, has He once said to you, “Get you gone, you weary Me?” Has He ever said, “My ear is heavy that it cannot hear, My arm is shortened that I cannot save?” Has He said, “Away with you, I do not want to be perpetually hearing you? What is your harsh grating voice, that I should always give My ear to it? Am I not hearkening to the songs of angels, to the shouts of cherubim? Away with you, tease Me not. At certain seasons you may come, on the Sabbath-Day you may pray, but I want not to hear you in the week”?

No, no, He has sweetly embraced us every time. He has always bowed the Heaven and come down to listen to our feeble cries. He has never denied a promise, never broken His Word, even when we have pleaded a thousand times a day. Oh I will love the name of such a patient God as this, who bears with my prayers though they be as a cloud of hornets in the air.

IV. Go a little further and you will have another thought arising. Think of THE GREATNESS OF THE MERCY FOR WHICH YOU HAVE OFTEN ASKED HIM. We never know the greatness of our mercies till we get into trouble and want them. I talk today of pardoned sin, but I confess I do not feel its preciousness as once I did. There was a time when my sins lay heavy on me—conscience accused me and the Law condemned me and I thought if God would but pardon me, it would be the greatest thing He ever did. The creating of a world seemed to me to be but little compared with the taking away of my desperately evil sins. Oh, how I cried, how I groaned before Him. And He has pardoned me and blessed be His name for it. But I cannot estimate the value of His pardon today so well as I could when I was seeking it—almost driven to despair.

Oh, remember Soul, when you did ask for pardon you were asking for that which worlds could not buy. You were asking for that which could only be procured through the lifeblood of the Son of God. Oh, what a blessing was that! And yet He did not look you in the face and say, “You have asked too much.” No, but He gave it freely. He upbraided not. He blotted out all your sins and washed you at once in the river of the Savior’s blood. Since that time what large things have you asked! You were in trouble once, it seemed as if bankruptcy must overtake you and you did cry to Him. If the world heard it, it would have said, “What a fool are you to ask this of your God—he will never deliver you!” Unbelief, like Rabshekeh, wrote a blasphemous letter and you did lay it before the Lord. But even when you were in prayer, your heart said, “The Lord will not deliver you this time. The lion will surely devour you. The furnace will most certainly burn you up.”

But you put up a poor, groaning prayer and you dared to ask great things, namely, that God would put His hand out of Heaven and save you from the waters, that the flood might not overflow you. Are you not surprised at this time that you dared to ask so much! You would not dare to ask so largely of any of your friends. You would not have gone to one and said, “I must have a thousand pounds by such-and- such a day, will you lend it to me?”—you knew you would not get it. Yet you asked it of your God. It came and here you are, the living to praise His name. And if this were the right place you would stand up and testify that God did hear you, that in the day of sorrow and tribulation He delivered you. Now do you not love Him for giving you such great things as these? God’s mercies are so great that they cannot be magnified. They are so numerous they cannot be multiplied, so precious they cannot be over-estimated. I say, look back today upon these great mercies with which the Lord has favored you in answer to your great desires and will you not say, “I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications”?

V. Another aspect of this case, perhaps, will reach our hearts more closely still. HOW TRIVIAL HAVE BEEN THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE OFTEN TAKEN BEFORE GOD AND YET HOW KINDLY HAS HE CONDESCENDED TO HEAR OUR PRAYERS. It is a singular thing, that our hearts are often more affected by little than by great things. You may feed a child all the year round and never get its thanks, but give it a sweetmeat or an orange and you may have its heart and its gratitude. Strange that the bounties of a whole year should seem to be lost, while the gift of a moment is greatly prized. A little thing, I say, may often touch the heart more than a great thing. Now, how often have we, if we have acted rightly, taken little things before the Lord. I believe it is the Christian’s privilege to take all his sorrows to his God, be they little or be they great. I have often prayed to God about a matter at which you would laugh if I should mention it. In looking back I can only say it was a little thing, but it seemed great at the time. It was like a little thorn in the finger, it caused much pain and might have brought forth, at last, a great wound. I learned to lay my little troubles at the feet of Jesus. Why should we not? Are not our great ones little in His sight? And is there, after all, much difference between great troubles and little ones in the sight of God?

The queen will stand at one hour listening to her ministers, who talk with her about public business, but does she seem less a queen when, afterwards, her little child runs to her as its mother, because a gnat has stung it? Is there any great condescension in the matter? She who was a right royal queen when she stood in the privy chamber is as right royal a queen and as well-beloved a mother of the nation, when she takes the little child upon her knee and gives it a maternal kiss. Her ministers must not present trifling petitions, but her children may. So the worldling may say this morning, “How absurd to think of taking little troubles to God.” Ah, it might be absurd to you, but to God’s children it is not.

Though you were God’s prime minister, if you were not His child, you would have no right to take your private troubles to Him. But God’s meanest child has the privilege of casting his care upon his Father and he may rest assured that his Father’s heart will not disdain to consider even his mean affairs. Now let me think of the innumerable little things God has done for me. In looking back, my unbelief compels me to wonder at myself, that I should have prayed for such little things. My gratitude compels me to say, “I love the Lord, because He has heard those little prayers and answered my little supplications and made me blessed, even in little things which, after all, make up the life of man.”

VI. Once more—let me remind you, in the sixth place, of THE TIMELY ANSWERS WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU TO YOUR PRAYERS and this should compel you to love Him. God’s answers have never come too soon nor yet too late. If the Lord had given you His blessing one day before it did come, it might have been a curse and there have been times when if He had withheld it an hour longer it would have been quite useless, because it would have come too late. In the life of Mr. Charles Wesley, there occurs a memorable scene at Devizes. When he went there to preach, the curate of the parish assembled a great mob of people, who determined to throw him into the horse pond and if he would not promise that he would never come into the town again they would kill him. He escaped into the house and hid himself upstairs.

They besieged the house for hours, battering at the doors, breaking every pane of glass in the windows and at last to his consternation, they climbed the roof and began to throw the tiles down into the street, so as to enter the house from above. He had been in prayer to God to deliver him and he said, “I believe my God will deliver me.” But when he saw the heads of the people over the top of the room in which he was concealed and when they were just about to leap down he very nearly gave up all hope. He thought surely God would not deliver him—when in rushed one of the leaders of the mob, a gentleman of the town who did not wish to inincur the guilt of murder and proposed to him that he would get him away if he would only promise that he would never come back again. “No,” said he, “I will never promise that. “But,” said the man, “Is it your intention that you will not return immediately?” “Well” he said, “I do not say I shall come back just yet, I do not see any use in it. As you drive me away, therefore I shall shake off the dust of my feet against you, but I mean to come back again before I die.” “Well,” said the man, that will do, if you only promise you will not come back directly I will get you away.”

And so, by a great deliverance, he was saved from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear. His prayer was answered at the right time. Five minutes afterwards he would have been dead. Now cannot you say that the answer has come to you punctually at the very tick of the clock of wisdom, not before nor after?

VII. Now, the seventh remembrance with which I would inspire you is this—will you not love the Lord, when you remember the special and great instances of His mercy to you? You have had seasons of special prayer and of special answer. Let me picture a man. There was one who feared not God, nor regarded man. He was engaged in business and his affairs were not propitious, but rather everything went against him. He went against God and kicked the more because God kicked against him. He had servants about him that feared God and worshipped Him. But as for himself, he had no thought or regard for religion. His affairs became more and more perplexed and involved. One day he passed by the house of one of his workmen, where prayer was desirous to be made, and listening, he heard words uttered in supplication that touched his heart. Though he was the master, he went inside and listened to his servant while he preached.

God touched that man’s heart and made him feel his need of a Savior. He went home and he had now double cause for prayer. He went to the Lord and told him he was a poor, wretched undone sinner and that he wanted mercy. And then he told the Lord, though he did not make it very prominent, that he was a poor, almost broken merchant, and that if God did not appear for him, he knew not but that he must be driven out of house and home. These two cases were laid before God. First of all, God heard his prayer for his soul. He gave him joy and peace in believing. And poor as he was at that time, he found enough to assist in erecting a house where the Gospel might be preached. The Lord who had delivered him spiritually, now came to his assistance temporally. His affairs took a different turn, floods of prosperity rolled in upon him and he is at this very day a living witness of the power of God to answer man’s prayer for spiritual and for temporal things, too.

And if it were needed, he could bear his willing witness of special answer in that special time of necessity. And does he not love his God? I know he does. For he delights to honor Him, he delights to give of his substance to Him. And there may be others of you here present whose characters have been pictured in this one which I have portrayed before you who are saying, “Surely he means me.” Oh, will you not then, at the

remembrance of what God did in that double mercy, say, “I love Him. What can I do for him? There is nothing too great for me to give—nothing too large for me to do. Only let me know my duty and the remembrance of his marvelous bounty shall lead me to give of my substance to Him. To give my whole heart to Him. I will be wholly His and hope that in death He will receive me to Himself.”

Men and women, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ—will you look back a few short years and remember the time when you were on your knees before God, seeking Him? I could fix my eye today upon many a man who has been a drunkard, a swearer, a breaker of God’s holy day, a hater of everything good. I think I see you in that upper chamber of yours. Oh, how you cried, how you groaned! Oh, with what agony did you pour out your unutterable sighs! You rose up and you thought God would not have mercy on you. You went to your business. How wretched you were! You went back again to the chamber. And how the beam out of the wall could speak now and tell you how you cried and cried and cried again before His Mercy Seat.

Do you love Him but a little today? Has your love grown cold? Go home and look again upon the chair against which you kneeled. Look at the very walls and see if they do not accuse you, saying, “I heard you pray to God for mercy and He has heard you. Now I see your cold-heartedness. I mark your lukewarmness in His cause.” Go home to your chamber, fall on your knees and with tears of gratitude say—

*“O you, my Soul, bless God the Lord.  
And all that in me  
Be stirred up, His holy name  
To magnify and bless!”*

Some of us can remember other special seasons of prayer. Members of my Church, I remind you of that solemn season, when, like a hurricane of desolation, the judgment of God swept through our midst. Standing in this pulpit this very morning, I recall to myself that evening of sorrow, when I saw my people scattered like sheep, without a shepherd, trod upon, injured and many of them killed. Do you remember how you cried for your minister, that he might be restored to a reason that was then tottering? Can you remember how you prayed that out of evil God would bring forth good, that all the curses of the wicked might be rolled back upon themselves and God would yet fill this place with His glory? And do you remember how long ago that is and how God has been with us ever since and how many of those who were injured that night, are now members of our Church and are praising God that they ever entered this house?

Oh, shall we not love the Lord? There is not a Church in London that has had such answers to prayer as we have. There has not been a Church that has had such cause to pray. We have had special work, special trial, special deliverance and we ought pre-eminently to be a Church loving God and spending and being spent in His service. Remember again the varied times of your sickness, when you have been sick, sore and near unto death. Let me picture my own experience that I may remind you of yours. I remember when I came to this pulpit in agony and preached you a sermon which seemed to cost me my life’s blood at every word I uttered. I was taken home to my bed full of grief and agony. I remember those weary nights, those doleful days, that burning brow, those roaming thoughts, those specters that haunted my dreams, that sleep without sleep, that rest that knew no rest, that torture and that pain.

Then I sought God and cried that He would spare me to stand in this pulpit once again. Oh, I thought then, in my poor foolish way, that I would preach as I never had preached before, as “a dying man to dying men.” I hoped my ministry was not over. I trusted I might have another opportunity of freeing myself from the blood of hearers, if any of that blood were on my garments. Here I stand and I have to chide myself that I do not love Him as I ought. Yet nevertheless, in the remembrance of His great mercy, saving my soul from death and my eyes from tears, I must love Him and I must praise Him. And I must in reminding each of you of similar deliverances, beseech and entreat you to bless the Lord with me. O let us magnify His name together! We must do something fresh, something greater, something larger than we have done before.

Having thus delivered these thoughts, I shall want you now for about three minutes to listen to me while I teach you three lessons which ought to spring from this sevenfold retrospect. What shall I say then? God has heard my voice in my prayer. The first lesson, then, is this—He shall hear my voice in my praise. If He heard me pray, He shall hear me sing. If He listened to me when the tear was in my eye, He shall listen to me when my eye is sparkling with delight. My piety shall not be that of the dungeon and sick bed. It shall be that also of deliverance and of health—

*“I’ll praise my Maker with my breath.  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers— My days of praise shall never be past,  
While life and thought and being last,  
Or immortality endures.”*

Another lesson. Has God heard my voice? Then I will hear His voice, by His grace. If He heard me I will hear Him. Tell me, Lord, what would You have Your servant do and I will do it. What would you have me believe and I will believe it. If there is a labor which I have never attempted before, tell me to do it and I will say, “Here am I, Lord, send me.” Is there an ordinance to which I never attended? Do you say, “Do this in remembrance of Me”? Is it Your command? However non-essential it seems to be, I will do it, because You have told me to do it. If You have heard my feeble voice, I will hear Yours, even though it is but a still small voice. Oh that we would learn that lesson!

The last lesson is, Lord, have You heard my voice? Then I will tell others that You will hear their voice, too. Did You save me? O Lord, if You saved me You can save anybody! Did You hear my prayer?—

*“Then will I tell to sinners round,*

*What a dear Savior I have found”*  
and I will bid them pray, too. O you that never pray, I beseech you begin from this hour. May God the Spirit lead you to your chambers to cry to Him! Remember, if you ask through Jesus, you cannot ask in vain. I can prove that in a thousand instances God has heard my supplications. There was nothing more in me than there is in you. Go and plead the promise. Plead the blood and ask for the help of God’s Spirit. And there is not one in this assembly who shall not receive the blessing, if God shall lead him to pray. Young man, young woman, go home. Plead with God for yourself first. You that love Him, plead for others. Let everyone of us practice the second verse of this Psalm, “Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.”

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3200 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH JUSTIFYING SPEECH  
NO. 3200

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1910.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 9, 1873.

**“I believed, therefore have I spoken.”  
Psalm 116:10.**

SOME translators render this passage, “I believed, though I have spoken as I have done,” for the Psalmist had spoken words suggestive of unbelief. But, although he had spoken unwisely and unbelievingly, yet, deep down in his heart, he did still believe in his God. What a mercy it is for us that God does not judge us by our hasty speeches! If He can see only a spark of faith amidst the dense smoke of our unbelief, He accepts it!

We will, however, take the text as we find it in our version—“I believed, therefore have I spoken.” To speak what we believe to be false is atrocious. God grant that our lips may never be defiled by the utterance of anything that we do not really believe! To speak what we only think to be true is idle and often mischievous. Many have been grieved and hurt by the repetition of slanders which have passed from mouth to mouth without anyone being able to vouch for their accuracy—and those who repeated them have often done serious injury to the characters of those who were far better than themselves. On the other hand, to know the Truth of God, and not to speak it, is cowardly. The Psalmist did not say, “I believed, and yet I was silent,” for that silence might have proved that he was of a cowardly spirit and was afraid that some unpleasant consequences might come upon himself if he dared to deliver unpopular truth. Every speaker is glad enough to say that which will please his auditors and bring credit to himself, but a true man declares what he believes, even though his hearers gnash their teeth at him because of his faithful testimony! To speak what you believe is your duty—to speak what you believe will be likely to benefit those who hear it and to speak what you believe will bring honor and glory to God who taught you the Truth. Therefore say with the Psalmist , “‘I believed, therefore have I spoken.’ I spoke out with my tongue what I had verified in my inmost soul.”

I am going to use the text in three ways. First, as the justification of the Christian minister. Secondly, as the argument for Christian profession. And thirdly, as the motive for supplication.

I. First, then, let us consider our text as THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER. “I believed, therefore have I spoken.”

No man ever ought to speak in God’s name, as a preacher of the Gospel, unless he can say, “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” When Paul quoted this verse, he added, “We also believe, and, therefore, speak.” And we who preach the Gospel, if we are really sent of God, believe what we speak in His name. It is a scandal and a shame that there are some ministers who do not believe the doctrines of the church to which they belong, yet they still retain both their position and their pay. I would not consider that I was worthy of the name of an honest man if I took money as the pastor of a Christian Church after I had given up my belief in the Truths I had professed to hold. We hear a great deal, nowadays, about the liberty of ministers to preach what they like, but what about the liberty of the people? Are they not to be considered? Are churches made for ministers, or ministers made for churches? After the people have elected a man to be their pastor, and he changes his views, it is only common honesty that he should say so and no longer pretend to preach what he does not believe, or to belong to a church with which he is not sincerely in sympathy. I cannot imagine a more dreary task than it would be for me to stand here simply to repeat what you wished me to say although my heart did not endorse the words I had to utter! I would never be such a slave as that, but would sooner break stones on the road, or labor at the treadmill in prison!

There are some who do not believe the Bible, but we believe it. There are some who question the great Truths of the faith, but we can lay our hand upon our heart and say that we do not question them. There are some who deny the Deity of Christ and the efficacy of His atoning blood but, as for us, we verily believe them and, therefore, we proclaim them to others. We believe what we speak—and we speak because we believe God has called us to speak. If we could be silent, we would, but we feel that we must preach the Gospel! The man who is sent of God cannot do otherwise than deliver the message that has been given to him—he feels that the fire within him would consume him if he did not let flaming words pour forth from his lips! It was because the Lord had made Ezekiel a watchman unto the house of Israel that he proclaimed his Master’s message with such power and unction—and it must be in a similar way that a minister must be to his people as the mouth of God!

Moreover, we believe that the Truths of God we are bid to preach are so important that we cannot be silent concerning them. We believe that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that God is angry with the wicked every day and that, if men live and die in their sins, they must be cast away from His Presence forever. There may be some of our hearers who will not give heed to our message, but we believe it and, therefore, we speak it. It has become unfashionable to talk of Hell and to mention the wrath to come which is awaiting the ungodly, but fashionable or unfashionable, we cannot keep silent concerning these terrible Truths and we try to use them as Paul did, “Knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” We will not, in unhallowed silence, keep back from sinners a true statement of their present lost condition and of their future awful doom unless they repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! I have often used as the language of my own heart those solemn lines that John Wesley translated—

*“Shall I, for fear of feeble man,  
Your Spirit’s course in me restrain?  
Or undismayed in deed and word,  
Be a true witness for my Lord?  
Awed by a mortal’s frown,  
Shall I conceal the Word of God Most High? How then before You shall I dare  
To stand, or how Your anger bear?  
Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng,  
Soften Your Truths and smooth my tongue? To gain earth’s gilded toys, or flee  
The Cross endured, my God, by Thee?  
The love of Christ does me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the fiery wave.”*

There, is, however, more than this that we believe and, therefore, speak. We believe that a great Atonement has been offered for sin, that by His death upon Calvary’s Cross, Jesus Christ cleared the channel of Divine Mercy so that now, without injury to His Justice, God can forgive human transgression. Most intensely do we believe, “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” How can we keep silent when we have such good tidings to tell? Accursed would be our lips if we should retain this heavenly secret! We will not do so. We believe and, therefore, do we proclaim to all that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We believe that there is a full and free pardon for every sinner who believes in Jesus, that there is acceptance with God through the righteousness of Christ for every sinner who truly repents and believes, that there is regeneration, that there is adoption into the family of God, that there is salvation here, and eternal glory hereafter, for everyone that believes in Jesus! And believing all this, can we remain silent concerning it? Why, sometimes when a man has made a great discovery, he feels as if he must run down the street, as that old mathematician did, crying, “Eureka! Eureka!” when he had solved the problem that had so long puzzled him. We, too, can cry, “Eureka! Eureka!” for we have found what we long sought in vain! We have found a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for all care. We have found that which brings even the dead to life and which will bring to Heaven those who have been lying at Hell’s dark door! How can we keep to ourselves such wondrous discoveries as these? Can we hide in our own heart all that we have learned concerning our blessed Savior? As for me, I say with Charles Wesley—

*“My gracious Master and my God,  
Assist me to proclaim  
And spread through all the earth abroad, The honors of Your name.”*

Further, we speak the Truth of God that has been revealed to us because we believe the preaching of the Gospel will effect great good. We do not preach the Gospel merely because we believe that it may be useful— we preach it because we believe that it must be useful. It is not with us a question whether God will or will not bless the ministry that He has Himself ordained—we believe that He must bless His own Word, for we have His promise that He will do so. “It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” There is not a true sermon preached beneath the cope of Heaven, whether in a cathedral, or on a village green, that God will not bless, in some way or other, and make it tend to His own Glory. We do not expect this result because of any merit or fitness in our hearers, for they are spiritually like the dry bones that Ezekiel saw in the valley. Our faith is in the Spirit of God to whom we cry even as the Prophet cried, “Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” And the result in our case is the same as it was in his—

*“Dry bones are raised, and clothed afresh, And hearts of stone are turned to flesh.”*

We believe and, therefore, do we speak—and this often accounts for our style of speaking—and sometimes accounts for the faults of it. The man who believes does not always weigh his words, or guard his statements, or speak as coolly and deliberately as others do. They tell us that we sometimes wax too warm. If we do, it is because we believe so fervently the Truths of God that we preach! Some say that, at times, we are harsh and intolerant. But he who believes the Truth cannot be tolerant of the error that would cloud it! Was Elijah too harsh? That is not a question that we need answer—we know that it was because he believed so fully in Jehovah that he could not have any part or lot with the prophets of Baal or the prophets of the groves. He would not have used the popular language of the present day and boasted of his charity to all men, true or false. He knew that as truth is true, a lie is a lie, and is to be treated as a lie, not as though it ought to be welcomed on equal terms with the truth! He believed, and, therefore, he spoke and acted as he did! And, dear Friends, you must not be surprised if we sometimes speak more severely than you think we ought. Intense conviction often carries a man beyond what his hearers might think to be justifiable. I have seen politicians excited and some of their words have been anything but decorous. I have been in the Paris Bourse and have seen how excited the dealers in stocks and shares have been, and how they raged and raved like Bedlamites as prices rose and fell. May other men be excited about gold or government and may we never be excited about God and His Truth, about Heaven and Hell, about the eternal welfare of our own and our fellow creatures’ souls? This is our justification—we believe and, therefore, speak—we believe so intensely that we are bound to speak with the accent of conviction!

Luther used to preach like one who had found the grand secret which he must proclaim to others. Some of the things that he said could not be repeated nowadays—they would not at all suit the modern taste—yet he spoke as the times in which he lived needed that he should speak! It must have been grand to hear him, or that other mighty preacher, John Knox, of whom it was said that he was so feeble and so full of pain that as he went up to the pulpit, one might have feared that he would have died before he finished his discourse, yet, before he had proceeded far, so excited did he grow as the Truth of God burned and blazed up in his soul, that it seemed as if the pulpit, itself, would be smashed to pieces with the intense force that he threw into his preaching! Yes, Luther and Knox believed and, therefore, spoke with an emphasis and a fervor that would be accounted madness in these prim and proper times in which we live! And we would far rather be judged to be as “mad” as they were, than seek to please those to whom truth and lies appear to be of equal value! No, Sirs, you may mark out certain boundaries beyond which you say that we must not go, but we shall leap over them if we can thereby save some! And it is quite possible that our mannerisms and eccentricities, as you call them, will cause a shock to some of your notions of ministerial propriety. If souls are to be saved from going down to the Pit, we must be terribly in earnest even as our Master was. If brands are to be plucked from the burning, we shall not do such work with kid-gloved hands! This generation is so engrossed with its idols and heresies that it will not be called to the living God by gentle whispering or the lisping of a love-sick maid. We must cry aloud and spare not! We must preach earnestly, intensely and, as some will judge, roughly. And even then, nothing will come of our preaching unless the Spirit of God, Himself, shall accompany it with His own effectual working in the hearts of our hearers. God grant that He may do so!

I must close this part of the subject by saying that when the Psalmist said, “I believed, therefore have I spoken,” he meant, “What I spoke, that I believed.” And we are prepared to adopt his language and to attach the same meaning to it and also to add that what we have spoken in the past, that we still believe. We have not changed our views, our sentiments, or Doctrines. But do we not pay any tribute to the enlightenment of the age? Are we not to keep pace with the growth of the intelligence of this wonderful 19th Century? Brothers and Sisters, we do not believe in doing anything of the kind! What was true 20 years ago is true, now, and what is true now will be just as true 20 years hence. I once talked with a minister who said to me, “You must find it very easy to preach.” I asked him why he thought so, and he replied, “Because you believe a certain set of Truths and you have only to preach them.” “Yes,” I answered, “it is so, but is not that also the case with you?” “Oh, dear no,” he said, “I think my creed out every week. It is constantly changing, for I am so receptive.” We are also receptive—not receptive of modern novelties and heresies, nor of the mere fantasies of our own brain, but we are receptive of all that we find in this blessed Book! And that never changes. We may receive new light upon what is in the Word, but the new light will not make that false which was true before the new light came! We hope, when the time comes for us to die, that we shall be able to say, “As we commenced our ministry, so we finish it. Our first sermon was on the same lines as our last. Of course there was a growth in our power of receiving and expounding the Truth of God, but it was the same Truth that we received and that we preached at the first and at the last.” The end of our conversion, like that of the Apostle Paul and the faithful preachers of his day, has been, is now and, we trust, by God’s Grace, still will be, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

II. Now, secondly, we are to use our text as THE ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIAN PROFESSION—“I believed, therefore have I spoken.”  
Brothers and Sisters, true faith in the Gospel is not dumb faith. When a man believes it, he is bound to make an open profession of his belief. What is the Gospel? I will give it to you in our Lord’s own Words—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” There is to be the confession of faith made in Baptism as well as the belief of the Gospel with the heart. Paul thus summarizes “the word of faith” which he preached—“If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” You see how closely the confession of faith is connected with the faith, itself. And the promise of salvation is given at least in these two texts, to the faith that is united with the confession of it. It is the bounden duty of everyone who believes in Jesus to confess that he does so believe. You know how Christ Himself put it— “Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess, also, before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, (and denying is, in that verse, tantamount to not confessing), him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven.” You have no right to say, “I am a Believer in Christ, but I do not make a profession of my faith.” The profession of your faith is, under the Gospel, just as much your duty as the faith, itself, is! Indeed, I venture to say that true faith necessitates a confession of some sort. If a man believes the great Truths of which I have been speaking, he cannot altogether conceal his belief in them—his conviction of their truth is bound to come out sooner or later—and the sooner it comes out, the better. John Bunyan tells us that when he had found the Savior, he wanted to tell the crows on the plowed land all about it—which is to me an indication of the instinct which moves a man, when he has found Christ, to want to proclaim the good news far and wide!

Besides, this confession of faith is due to the minister whose message has been blessed to his hearers. Should he not be cheered and comforted by hearing that the Word he has preached has been used of God to the salvation of souls? He has more than enough to depress his spirit—ought he not to have anything that he can to encourage him? And what can bring him greater joy than the knowledge that he has not labored in vain, nor spent his strength for nothing?

The confession of faith is also due to the Church with which the convert unites. In the Apostolic days they first gave themselves unto the Lord and then gave themselves unto His people according to the will of God. Why should it not be the same now? How else is the Church to grow? How is it to have new blood put into its veins except concerning the coming forward of the young converts whom the Lord has looked upon in His mercy and saved by His Grace?

The confession of faith is especially due to the Lord who has implanted it in the heart. In these evil days when the enemies of the faith seem to be ashamed of nothing, none of those who are His friends ought to be ashamed of Him. The gage of battle has been thrown down. Many are massing around the black standard of the Prince of Darkness, so will not all of you who truly love the Prince Emmanuel, rally around His bloodred banner?—

*“You that are men, now serve Him,  
Against unnumbered foes!  
Your courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose.”*

If, indeed, you have been redeemed by His precious blood. If His Spirit has, indeed, regenerated you. And if His Grace is working in your hearts and lives, surely you cannot be so cowardly as to try to conceal yourselves as secret disciples of Christ! To do battle for Jesus is the most honorable service on earth! And, in the great Day of Account, happy shall he be who has bravely borne his part in the great conflict that is now raging between Christ and His Truth and anti-Christ and his lies! Come to the front, Brothers and Sisters! Come to the front! Press forward to that point where the fight is the fiercest, for he is the happiest Christian who can

 do, and dare, and suffer the most for Jesus Christ, his Lord! Do not, for very shame, conceal your faith if you really believe in Jesus!

Probably the most of you are placed in positions where you are obliged to speak if you are Believers. In the workshop, how much is there of infidelity! In common business life, how much of indifference! In the gayer circles of society, how much of contempt for true religion! And in the coarser circles, how much of vulgar blasphemy! Shame on the man or woman who can live in the midst of worldlings and never let them know that they belong to Christ!

Surely, too, the very fact that you are so often in the company of Christian people ought to make you confess your faith. Even under the old dispensation, “they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another.” And they that truly fear the Lord do the same now. If you are among the God-fearing people of the present day, your speech will betray you. Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ will note your accent, they will perceive that you use their shibboleth, that you have been with Jesus and have learnt of Him. If any of you have received the blessing of salvation through the ministry here, come forward and avow your faith! I do not urge you to do this simply that we may add to our numbers, but as I have already reminded you, this is the reward of our labor which we deserve at your hands. If you have, indeed, passed from death unto life, come out boldly and say so! Though you may be one of the poorer members of the congregation. Though your faith may not be as strong as that of others. Yet if it is genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall rejoice over you and with you with exceeding joy! Whoever you may be, if you are truly trusting in Jesus, “come with us, and we will do you good.” When the question rings out in your hearing, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” Answer, “I am! I have enlisted among the soldiers of Christ and as I take Him to be my Captain, now, I trust that He will acknowledge me as one of His in the day when the last muster-roll of His troops is called and He gathers them all around Him to share with Him the spoils of His great victory.”—

*“Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!  
The strife will not be long.  
This day the noise of battle,  
The next the victor’s song!  
To him that overcomes,  
A crown of life shall be—  
He with the King of Glory  
Shall reign eternally!”*

III. I can only very briefly refer to the consideration of our text as THE MOTIVE FOR SUPPLICATION. “I believed, therefore have I spoken.”  
First, I believed in prayer, therefore have I spoken unto God. I did not regard it as a religious luxury, a pious but useless exercise and waste of time, as so many nowadays say that prayer to God is. I believe that as truly as you are listening to me, now, so God listens to me and I can speak to Him and receive answers from Him. That is the way to pray, young man—to speak to God because you believe that He is the hearer and answerer of prayer, for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.  
I also believed that Jesus Christ was pleading for me. By faith I could see the Man, Christ Jesus, standing before His Father’s Throne, with His pierced hands uplifted and presenting my poor prayers to His Father and so making them acceptable through His intercession on my behalf. I believed in Him as the Mediator between God and man and, therefore, I dared to speak to God by virtue of His mediation, though I could not have acceptably approached the Majesty on High in any other way.  
I also believed in the Holy Spirit as working in me and teaching me how to pray. The Holy Spirit gave me right desires and helped my infirmities, for I knew not what to pray for as I ought. But because the mind of the Spirit is also the mind of God, I was able, under His gracious guidance, to approach the Throne of Grace acceptably and, therefore, because I believed in the Spirit, therefore have I spoken unto God in prayer—and I have not spoken in vain!  
I also believed in God’s promise to hear and answer prayer and, therefore, I have spoken unto Him in the full conviction that He would hear and answer me. I believed that every promise that He had given would be kept to the very letter, so I took each promise as I needed it, quoted it when bowing before God in prayer—and then left it with Him, saying, “Lord, do as You have said. Here is Your promise. I believe it, therefore have I spoken it in Your ears. Will You not fulfill this Word unto Your servant, whereon You have caused me to hope?” I believed that God was faithful, so that He would fulfill His promise and that He was willing, so He could fulfill it and grant me all that I needed so long as I could find in His Word a promise adapted to my case.  
“I believed, therefore have I spoken.” This is the way to pray. An unbelieving prayer asks God for a refusal of its requests. Remember what the Apostle James writes—“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”  
If you believe the Bible, speak of it wherever you can. If you believe in Jesus, preach Him to all who are within sound of your voice. If you believe in the Spirit, walk in His might and tell others of that wondrous power. But if you have never believed, may the Lord grant you Grace to believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit! May He grant you Grace to believe the Bible, Grace to believe the Gospel and then, when you have believed, may you not keep the blessing to yourself, but first make your own personal confession of faith—and then publish far and wide all that has been revealed to you by the Spirit! So shall you be able to say with the Psalmist, “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” God grant it, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 116.**

We have read this Psalm many times. Let us read it now, regarding it not so much as the language of the Psalmist uttered thousands of years ago, but as our own language at this moment.

Verse 1. I love the LORD. Let us go as far as that if we can. Let us, each one, say, “I love the Lord.”

1. Because. There is a reason for this love. People say that love is blind, but love to God uses her eyes and can justify herself! “I love the Lord, because”—

1. He has heard my voice and my supplications. [See Sermon #240, Volume 5—  
PRAYER ANSWERED, LOVE NOURISHED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Can you go as far as that? Do you recollect answers to prayer when you cried to God with your voice, or when your voice failed you, but supplication rose to God from your heart? Surely there is not a man whose prayers have been answered, who does not love God! He must love the Lord when he recollects what poor prayers his were, what great blessings came in answer to them and how speedily and how often God has heard his prayers and granted his requests!

2. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. That is a vow which we may well make and hope for Grace to keep it. It means that as we have succeeded so well in begging at God’s door, we will keep on begging of Him as long as we live. I suppose the Psalmist meant that because Jehovah had heard him, therefore he would never call upon any false god but, as long as he lived, he would resort to the one living and true God. I hope that you and I can say the same. We have tried the Fountain of Living Waters—why should we go to broken cisterns that can hold no water? Prayer to God has always succeeded—why should we not continue it? All you who have plied the trade of mendicants at the Mercy Seat must have been so enriched by it in your souls that you are determined to stand there as long as you live. “Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.” This is sound reasoning, for even the emotions of Believers, when they are most fervent, are based upon solid reasons. We can defend ourselves even when we grow warmest in love to God and most earnest in prayer! Now the Psalmist tells one of his many experiences in prayer—

3, 4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD. Dark days are good days for praying. When your eyes cannot see, you pray all the better! When there is no earthly prop to lean upon, you are all the more ready to lean upon God alone! The Psalmist was like a poor worm in a ring of fire—“the sorrows of death compassed me.” The sheriff’s officer seemed to hold him in his grip—“the pains of Hell got hold upon me.” As for his inner experience, he found nothing there but “trouble and sorrow.” When the town of Mansoul was besieged, every way of escape was closed except the way upwards—and it was so with the Psalmist and, therefore, he made use of that way! “Then I called upon the name of the Lord.” His prayer was short, earnest and full of meaning—

4. O LORD. I beseech You, deliver my soul. [See Sermon #1216, Volume 21—TO  
SOULS IN AGONY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He

did not have to search for a form of prayer—his words were such as came naturally to his mind—and that is the best sort of prayer which arises out of the heart’s sincere desire.

5. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yes, our God is merciful. The Psalmist was delivered by an act of Grace, yet it was an act of righteousness, for God is not unrighteous to break His own promise, and He has promised to help His people. Grace and righteousness both guarantee answers to believing prayers—and mercy comes in to make assurance doubly sure—“Yes, our God is merciful.”

6. The LORD preserves the simple. Straightforward men, those who cannot play a double part, those simpletons whom others take in and laugh at because they are honest, true, genuine—the Lord preserves such people!

6. I was brought low and He helped me. Oh, these blessed personal pronouns! Are you laying hold of them as I read them? Are you speaking them out of your own soul?

7. Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the LORD has dealt bountifully  
with you. [See Sermon #2758, Volume 47—“RETURN UNTO YOUR REST”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Come home to Him, for  
you have no other friend like He in earth or Heaven! Come back to Him, my Soul, and rest where you have often rested before.

8. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. An eternity of mercies from the Eternal, Himself!  
9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. The best style of living is walking before God, so living in His sight as to be indifferent to the opinions and judgments of our fellow men and only caring to know that God is looking upon us with approval. This is the way to live! And if we have tried it, we have found it to be so pleasant that we are resolved to continue in it!  
10, 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. They have all failed me. Some of them could but would not help me, so they were as liars to me. Others would but could not, and as I have trusted them, they were as liars to me! But You, my God, are no liar, You are the Truth itself! I ask those of you who have had a very long and varied experience to look back and tell me whether you can recollect even once when your God has broken His promise. You have sometimes been afraid that He would forget it, but has He ever done so? If you speak as you have found Him, you must praise and adore the Faithful, Immutable, All-Sufficient Jehovah who has made your strength to be as your days even to this very hour!  
12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? That question contains the essence of true religion. This should be the one objective of our lives if we have been redeemed by Christ and are His servants. Whatever we have done for God, we should endeavor to do much more—and to do it much better.

13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. This is a curious way of rendering anything, yet you know that John Newton’s hymn says—

*“The best return for one like me  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from His gifts to draw a plea,  
And ask Him still for more.”*

14-16. I will say my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosened my bonds. [See Sermon #312, Volume 6— PERSONAL SERVICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It is a great blessing if we are able to say, as David did, that we are born into God’s house. Some of us had gracious mothers who brought us to the Lord in earnest prayer long before we knew anything. I can say to the Lord, “I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid”—and I have no greater wish than that all my descendants may be the Lord’s.

17-18. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people. Do it, Beloved! Let your hearts pour themselves out in silence, now, and afterwards in grateful song before the Lord. Praise Him, magnify Him, bless His name, “in the presence of all His people.” It is inspiriting to be with your Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Perhaps the devotion which burns low when there is only one brand on the hearth will burn all the better and brighter when we add many blazing brands to it!

19. In the courts of the LORD’S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD.  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #910 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

OVERWHELMING OBLIGATIONS  
NO. 910

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Psalm 116:12.

DEEP emotion prompts this question. But where are the depths of love and gratitude that can meet its exuberant demands? You will perhaps remember an incident in the life of a famous soldier, who also became a famous Christian, Colonel James Gardiner. One night he was little thinking of Divine things, but on the contrary had made an appointment of the most vicious kind. He was waiting for the appointed hour when he saw, or thought he saw before him in the room where he sat alone, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

He was impressed, as if a voice, or something equivalent to a voice, had come to him to this effect—“O sinner, I did all this for you. What have you done for me?” Some such representation as that I would put before the eyes of every person in this assembly. I earnestly pray that the vision of the Christ of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, may appear to all your eyes. And may a Voice say in your conscience, both to saint and sinner, “I did all this for you. What have you done for Me?” It will be a humiliating night probably for us all, if such should be the case—but humiliation may prove salutary—yes, the very healthiest frame of mind in which we can be found.

I. I shall first of all this evening, invite you to CAST UP A SUM IN ARITHMETIC. The text suggests this. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Come, let us reckon up! Though I know that the number will surpass all human numeration, let us try to reckon up His benefits toward any one of us. I wish each one of you, distinctly and severally, would now endeavor to think of the mercy of God towards yourself.

First, let us call over the roll of our temporal mercies. They are but secondary, but they are very valuable. There is a special Providence in the endowment of life to each individual creature. David did not disdain to trace back the hand of God to the hour of his nativity. And Paul adored the Grace of God that separated him from the time that his mother gave him birth. Our gratitude may, in like manner, revert to the days when we hung upon the breast. Or in the case of some, you may thank the goodness that supplied the lack of a mother’s tender love.

Childhood’s early days might then make our thoughts busy, and our tongues vocal with praise. But here we are now. We have been preserved, some of us, these thirty or forty years. We might have been cut down and punished in our sin. We might have been swept away to the place where despair makes eternal night. But we have been kept alive in the midst of many accidents. By some marvelous godsend, death has been turned aside just as it seemed, with a straight course, to be posting toward us. When fierce diseases have been waiting round to hurry us to our last home, we have yet escaped.

Nor have we merely existed. God has been pleased to give us food, raiment, and a place where to lay our weary heads. To many here present He has given all the comforts of this life, till they can say, “My cup runs over, I have more than any heart can wish.” To all here He has given enough, and though you may have passed through many straits, your bread has been given you, and your water has been sure. Is not this cause for thankfulness?

You cannot think of a shivering beggar tonight in the streets, you cannot think of the hundreds of thousands in this unhappy country—unhappy for that reason—who have no shelter but such as the poorhouse can afford them. And no bread but such as is doled out to them as a pauper’s meager pittance, without being grateful that you have been, up to now, supplied with things convenient for your sustenance, and defended from that bitter, biting penury which palls self-respect, cows industry, damps the ardor of resolution, chafes the heart, corrodes the mind, prostrates every vestige of manliness, and leaves manhood itself to be the prey of misery and the victim of despair.

More than that, we have reason tonight to be very grateful for the measure of health which we enjoy. “It is indeed a strange and awful sensation to be suddenly reduced by the unnerving hand of sickness to the feebleness of infancy. For giant strength to lie prostrate, and busy activity to be chained to the weary bed.” Oh, when the bones begin to ache, and sinews and tissues seem to be but roads for pain to travel on, then we thank God for even a moment’s rest. Do you not know what it is to toss to and fro in the night and wish for the day, and when the daylight has come, to pine for the night?

If there has been an interval of relief, just a little lull in the torture and the pain, how grateful you have been for it! Shall we not be thankful for health, then, and specially so for a long continuance of it? You strong men that hardly know what sickness means, if you could be made to walk the wards of the hospital and see where there have been broken bones, where there are disorders that depress the system, maladies incurable, pangs that rack and convulse the frame, and pains all but unbearable, you would think, I hope, that you had cause enough for gratitude.

Not far off this spot there stands a dome—I thank God for the existence of the place of which it forms a part—but I can never look at it. I hope I never shall, without lifting up my heart in thanks to God that my reason is spared. It is no small unhappiness to be bereft of our faculties, to have the mind swept to and fro in hurricanes of desperate, raging madness, or to be victims of hallucinations that shut you out from all usefulness, and even companionship with your fellow men. That you are not in St. Luke’s or Bedlam tonight should be a cause for thankfulness to Almighty God.

But why do I enlarge here? Consider to what pains the human body may be subjected. Imagine what ills may come upon humanity. Conceive what distress, what woe, what anguish, we are all capable of bearing—and then in proportion as you have been secured from all these, and in proportion on the other hand as you have been blessed with comforts and enjoyments—“let each generous impulse of your nature warm into ecstasy.” And then ask yourselves the question, “What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us?” Cast up the sum, and then draw a line and ask what is due to God for even these common gifts of Providence.

But, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you who have something better than this life to rest upon, I touch a higher and a sweeter string—a chord which ought to tremble with a nobler melody, when I say to you—think of the spiritual blessings which you have received! It is not very long ago that you were in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. We look back but for a little while, some of us, and we were under the bondage of the Law. We had been awakened, and we felt the load and the guilt of sin—a grievous burden from which we feared we never could escape—a flagrant defilement from which we knew no means of cleansing.

Do not I remember well my fruitless prayers, my tears that were my meat both day and night, my grief of heart! They cut me to the quick, and I found no kind of deliverance! How I sought the Lord then! How I cried for mercy, but I found none! I was shut up and could not come forth. I was delivered up to fear, and doubt, and despair. Bless the Lord, it is over now! Blessed be the name of God, my soul has escaped like a bird out of the net! And this night, instead of talking of sin as a thing unpardonable, I can stand here and say for you, as well as myself, that He has put away all our iniquity, and cast our transgressions into the depths of the sea!

If He had never done anything for us but that, it seems to me that we should be bound forever and forever to extol His name with as much exultation as Miriam and Moses felt, when Miriam took the timbrel, and Moses wrote the song, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He cast into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation.”

Not indeed, Beloved, that forgiven sin was the total. It was but an item, the beginning of His tender mercies towards us. For after that He comforted us like as a mother comforts her children. He bound up every wound. He removed every blot. He covered us with a robe of righteousness and decked us with the jewels of the Spirit’s Graces. He adopted us into His family, even we

who were aliens by nature, foes by long habit, rebels and traitors by our revolt against His government. He made us heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All the privileges of sonship, which never would have been ours by nature, have been secured to us by regeneration, and by adoption. All His benefits!

If these were all, oh, what should we render unto Him who is the Author and Giver of such inestimable blessings? All His benefits! How could we estimate their value, even if we had to stop here? Mark you, they are benefits, indeed, not merely the kind intent of benevolence, or good wishes, which may or may not be of real service to us. But verily the saving effect of beneficence, or good deeds accomplished for us—the full advantage of which we have richly to enjoy.

There is a vexatious uncertainty about all human philanthropy. How weak it often is, expending strength for nothing, and failing to mature its best projects! Though the physician should exhaust the resources of medical science while he spares no pains in watching his patient, that patient may die. Though the advocate pleads for his client with intense fervor, cogent reasoning, and a torrent of eloquence, that client may yet lose his cause. Though the general of an army command the troops ever so skillfully, and fight against the enemy ever so bravely, the battle may yet be lost.

The heroic volunteer who assays to rescue a drowning man may fail in the endeavor and lose his own life in the attempt. The valiant crew that man the lifeboat may not succeed in bringing the shipwrecked to shore. The best aims may miscarry. Kindness, like ore of gold in the breast of the creature, may never be minted into the coin of benefit, or pass current for its real worth. Not all donations expended in charity are effectual to relieve distress. But the benefits of God are all fully beneficial. They answer the ends they are designed to serve.

Forgetfulness on the part of God’s children is without excuse, for here we are, monuments of mercy, pillars of Grace, living Epistles—yes, the living, the living to praise You, O God, as I do this day. And thus beholden to the Lord for all His benefits, I feel that my thoughts and actions of adoring gratitude should break forth, restrained by no shore, but be continually overflowing every embankment that custom has thrown up, and send out in tears of love and sweat of labor, fertilizing streams on the right hand and on the left.

All His benefits! Ring that note again. His benefits are so many, so various, so minute, that they often escape our observation while they exactly meet our wants. True it is, the Lord has done great things for us which may well challenge the admiration of angels. But true it also is that He has done little things for us, and bestowed attention upon all our tiny needs and our childish cares and anxieties. As we turn over the leaves of our diary, we are lost in wonder at the keenness of that vision and the extent of that knowledge whereby even the hairs of our head are all numbered .

O God, what infinite tenderness, what boundless compassion You have shown to us! You have continued to forgive our offenses—You have perpetually upheld us in the hour of temptation. What comforts have delighted our soul in the times of trouble! What gentle admonitions have brought us back in the times of our going astray! We have had preserving mercies, sustaining mercies, enriching mercies, sanctifying mercies. Who shall count the small dust of the favors and bounties of the Lord?

My dear Brethren, it is no small benefit that God has conferred upon some of us that we are members of a happy Church on earth—that we are united together in the bonds of love. I know some of you used to be members of other Churches where there were periodic conflicts, and you are glad enough that you have come with a loving and happy people where you can serve the Lord to your heart’s content. By His Grace you meet with warm-hearted fellow Christians who bid you Godspeed. My heart exults in the thought of all the prosperity we have enjoyed in this place. The Lord’s name be praised! Even as a Church, over and above the mercies which have come to us as private Christians, I would say—and I would invite you to join me in saying—“What shall we render to the Lord for all His benefits toward us?”

But, Beloved, we have only begun the list of those mercies that we strive in vain to enumerate. We shall not try to finish it, for blessed be God, it never will be finished. He has given us Himself to be our portion. He has given us His Providence to be our guardian. He has given us His promises to be the vouchers of our inheritance. We shall not die, though we must sleep, unless the Lord first comes. Yet we shall sleep in Jesus! Our bones and ashes shall be watched over and preserved until the Resurrection trumpet shall summon them by its voice, and our bodies shall be reanimated by Divine power.

For our souls, we have the sure and certain hope that we shall be with Christ where He is, that we may behold His glory. We are looking forward to the blessed day when He shall say to us, “Come up higher,” and from the lower room of the feast we shall ascend into the upper chamber, nearer to the King, to sit at His right hand and feast forever. Oh, the depths of His mercy! Oh, the heights of His loving kindness! Faithfulness has followed us. Not a promise has been broken. Not one good thing has failed us!

Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, what have I just given you but a sort of general outline of the mercies the Lord has bestowed on us, and the benefits we have received at His hand? If each one would try to fill that outline up, by the rehearsal of his own case, and the life story of his own experience, how much glory God might get from this assembly tonight! Your case is different from mine in the incidents that compose it. I believe mine is different from any of yours—but this I know—there is not a man in this place that owes more to

God than I do. There is not one here that ought to be more grateful.

There cannot be one that is more indebted to the goodness of the Lord than I am for every step of the pilgrimage that I have trod, from the first day even until now. I can, no, I must speak well of His name. Truly God is good, and I have found Him so. “The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.” I have proved Him so. Well, I know all your tongues are itching to say the same. You feel that though He has led you through deep waters, and through fiery trials, and sometimes chastened you very severely, He has not given you over to death. He has dealt with you as a father with His son whom He loves, and been to you as a Friend that never forsakes.

You would not breathe half a word against His blessed name. Rather you would say, to borrow an expression which Rutherford constantly used, that you are, “drowned debtors to God’s mercy.” He meant that he was over head and ears in debt to God—he could not tell how deep his obligations were, so he just called himself, “a drowned debtor” to the loving kindness and the mercy of his God. Well, there is a sum for you. If you want to use your arithmetical faculties, sit down when you can get an hour’s quiet, and try to identify all the precious thoughts of God towards you—all His benefits.

II. Our second point shall be A CALCULATION OF THE GRATITUDE WHICH IS DUE TO GOD FOR ALL THIS. I should like to make each man his own assessor tonight, to assess the income of mercy which he has received, and put down what should be the tribute of gratitude which he should return to the revenue of the great King. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?”

Calculate, for a minute, what we owe to God the Father, and what we ought to render Him for the debt. As many as have believed in Christ were chosen of God the Father from before all worlds. He might have left them unchosen. It was His own absolute good pleasure which wrote them in the roll of the elect. He has chosen you, my Brothers and Sisters, that you should be holy, that you should be His children, that you should be made like your elder Brother, Christ Jesus. And because He chose you to this, to this you shall come— though all the powers of earth and Hell should withstand—for the Divine decree abides immutably steadfast and shall surely be fulfilled.

You are God’s favorite one, His child, ordained to dwell forever in eternal bliss. What shall we render for this? O let the thought just stir the depths of your soul a minute, if indeed it is so, that the seal of the Everlasting Covenant has been set upon you! Before the sun began to shine, or the moon to march in her courses, God did choose me, in whom there was nothing to engross His love—nothing to attract His favor. O my God, if it is so, that I, of all the sons of Adam, should be made a distinguishing object of Your Grace, and the subject of Your discriminating favor, take me. Take my body, take my soul, take my spirit, take my goods, my talents, my faculties—take all I have, and all I am, and all I ever hope to be—for I am Yours. You have loosed my bonds, but Your mercy has bound me to Your service forever.

Now think for a minute of what you owe to God the Son, to Jesus Christ. I mean as many of you as have believed on Him. Think for a moment on the habitation of the highest Glory, and consider how Jesus left His Father’s Throne, deserted the courts of angels, and came down below to robe Himself in an infant’s clay. There contemplate Him living in our nature. See Him after He has grown up, leading a life of toil and pain, bearing our sicknesses, and carrying our sorrows. Let your eyes look straight into the face of the Man who was acquainted with grief.

I shall not ask you to trace all His footsteps, but I would bid you come to that famous garden, where in the dead of the night He knelt and prayed, until in agony, He sweat drops of blood. It was for you, for you, Believer, that there the bloody sweat fell to the ground! You see Him rise up. He is betrayed by His friend. For you the betrayal was endured. He is taken. He is led off to Pilate. They falsely accuse Him. They spit in His face. They crown Him with thorns. They put a mock scepter of reed into His hands—for you all that ignominy was endured! For you, especially and particularly, the Lord of Glory passed through these cruel mockings.

See Him as He bears His Cross—His shoulders are bleeding from the recent lashes. See Him, as along the Via Dolorosa He sustains the cruel load. He bears that Cross for you. Your sins are laid on His shoulders and make that Cross more heavy than had it been made of iron. See Him on the Cross, lifted up between Heaven and earth, a spectacle of grievous woe. Hear Him cry, “I thirst!” And hear His cry more bitter, still, while Heaven and earth are startled by it, “Why have You forsaken Me, My God, My God?”

He is enduring all those griefs for you. For you the thirst and the fainting, the nakedness and the agony. For you the bowing of the head, the yielding up the ghost, the slumber in the cold and silent tomb. For you His resurrection when He rises in the glory of His might, and for you afterwards the ascension into Heaven, when they sing, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors.” For you His constant pleading at the right hand of the Father. Yes, all for YOU, and what should be done for Him?

What tribute shall we lay at the pierced feet? What present shall we put into that nailed hand? Where are kisses that shall be sweet enough for His dear wounds? Where is adoration that shall be reverent enough for His blessed and exalted Person? Daughters of music, bring your sweetest songs! You men of wealth, bring Him your treasures. You men of fame and learning, come lay your laurels at His feet. Let us all bring all that we have, for such a Christ as this deserves more than all. What shall we render, Christ of God, to You for all Your benefits towards us?  
Let me ask you to think for a moment on the third Person of the blessed

Godhead, namely, the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget that when we were like filthy rags His hand touched us. When we were like corrupt and rotten carcasses in the graves of sin, His breath quickened us. It was His hand that led us to the Cross. It was His fingers that took the film from our eyes. It was His eye salve that illuminated us that we should look to Jesus and live. Since that hour the blessed Spirit has lived in our hearts. Oh, what a dreadful place, I was about to say, for God to dwell in! But the Holy Spirit has never utterly left us. We have grieved Him. We have oftentimes vexed Him—but still He is here, still resident within the soul, never departing—being Himself the very life of the living incorruptible seed that abides forever.

My dear Friends, how often the Holy Spirit has comforted you! How very frequently in your calm moments has He revealed Christ to you! How often has the blessed Truth been laid home to you with a Divine savor which it never could have had, if it had not been for Him! He is God, and the angels worship Him, and yet He has come into the closest possible contact with you. Christ was Incarnate, and the flesh in which He was Incarnate was pure and perfect. The Holy Spirit was not incarnate, but still He comes to dwell in the bodies of His saints—bodies still impure, still unholy.

Oh, what Grace and condescension is this! You blessed Dove, You dear Comforter, You kind Lover of the fallen sons of men—Your condescension is matchless! We love You even as we love Christ Himself, and this night if we ask the question, “What shall we render unto the Lord, the Holy Spirit, for all His benefits towards us?” we know not how to answer, but can only say, “Take us, take us, Holy Spirit. Use us. Fill us with Yourself. Sanctify us to Your holiest purposes. Use us right up—make us living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God—for it is our reasonable service.”

Now perhaps, by God’s Spirit, the text may come a little more vividly before your minds. You have had another opportunity of adding up all the benefits of God—another opportunity, dear Brothers and Sisters, of calculating what you ought to do. Give heed, then, for I intend to come, in closing, to be very personal and practical. I wish to speak very pointedly to you as individuals—but there are so many of you that some are sure to slip away in the crowd. I half wish I were in the position of the preacher who had but one hearer, and addressed him as, “Dearly Beloved Roger.”

I want to put the question of my text as though only one person were here, and that one person, yourself. “What shall I render to the Lord?” Never mind your neighbor, your brother, your sister, your husband, your wife, or anybody else just now. If you are a saved soul, the question for you is, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” “What shall I render?” Suppose, dear Friend, you had been the woman bowed with an infirmity for so many years, and Christ had loosed you, and you had stood upright tonight? What would you render?

Well, you HAVE been loosed from your infirmity—a much worse decrepitude than the physical ailment she was released from! Suppose you had been poor blind Bartimaeus sitting by the wayside begging, born blind, and you had your sight given you tonight? What would you render? But you HAVE had such a gift bestowed on you. You were in spiritual blindness—worse than that which is only natural—and Christ has opened your eyes! What will you render? Suppose you had been Lazarus, and had been in the grave so long that you began to be corrupt, and Christ had raised you to life? What would you render? Well, you HAVE been quickened when you were dead in sin. You were corrupt. You were buried in darkness and in sin. But you can say with the Psalmist, “O Lord, You have brought up my soul from the grave.”

Now what will you render to Him? Suppose He stood on this platform tonight, and instead of this poor voice, and these unclean lips, the voice of the Well-Beloved should speak in music to you? And the lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh could talk to each of you? What would you render to Him, then? Well, do the same as though He were here, for He sees you! Yes, and His Spirit, hovering over this assembly, will accept the tribute you give as though He were here in the flesh—or otherwise He will grieve over you and resent the neglect of your heart. Think of Him as being here, and render unto Him as though He were visibly and audibly in our midst.

What will you render? Let me ask you, dearly Beloved, whether you have ever thought of what men and women can render. You may have read the lives, I hope you have, of Mr. and Mrs. Judson in Burma, ready to sacrifice all for Christ. Or the lives of our martyrs, in Foxe’s Martyrology, who rejoiced if they might burn for Christ. We still have some men and women among us—I wish there were more whose lives of consecration tell you what men can be and do. Are you anything like they are? If not, while they are not what they ought to be, and they fall short of the Master’s image, how far short must you be? Oh, I pray you are grieved that it is so, and press the question upon yourselves the more, What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

A side question may help you. What have you rendered? You are getting old now, or at least you are getting to the prime of life. What have you done for Christ up to this time? Come, look. Look back now, I must urge you to do it. Converted late perhaps, or if converted young, it matters not, still the question must come—What have you done up to now? Oh, I dare not answer the question myself—yet I am not in that respect the worst here—I dare not look back upon my past life of service for God with anything like satisfaction. After having done all that we could do, we are but unprofitable servants. We have not done what was our duty. There is no man here, I fear, who can answer the question, “What have I rendered?” with any self-contentment. We must all

drop a tear, feel abashed, and say, “Good Lord, let not the future be as barren as the past, but by Your mercy help us to a better and a nobler sort of living!”

May I ask you, as it may assist in answering the question, how old you are? Some of you tell me that you are far advanced in age. Then what must you render in the few years you can have to live? Live hard, Beloved, live hard— live fast in a

 spiritual sense, for you have little time to use, none to waste. Get as much done as can be done for your dear Lord, before He calls you to His face. You are young, others of you tell me. Oh, then with such a long opportunity as God may give you, you ought to be diligent every moment! If you are not diligent now in your early days, there is no likelihood that you will be afterwards. Since you have the special and peculiar advantage of early piety, O render to the Lord the more, because He has opened before you a wider field, and given you more time to cultivate it than full many of His people have known.

Let me ask you, again, What are your capacities? That, perhaps, will help you to answer the question. “Oh,” says one, “I cannot do much.” Well then, my dear Friend, do the little you can. Do it all—do it up to the very point—do not leave an inch untouched. If you can only do a little, do all of that, and do it heartily. And keep at it till you die. Says another, “Perhaps God has entrusted some talents to me.” Then He expects a great deal from the employment of them. O do not let your talents lie idle! Your talents are not meant for your gain, nor merely to serve the world. They are meant to serve your God, who has redeemed you with the precious blood of Jesus. Take care, whether you have much or little, to give Him all.

I will put another question to you that may stir your mettle. How did you serve Satan before you were converted? What rare boys some of you were—not sparing body or soul to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Oh, with what zest, with what fervor and force and vehemence did many of you dance to the tune of the devil’s music! I wish you would serve God half as well as some of the devil’s servants serve him. What? Now you have a new Friend, a new Lover, a new Husband—shall He ever look you in the face and say, “You do not love Me so well as the old. You do not serve Me so zealously”? Shall Jesus Christ say to any man or woman among us, “You do not love Me so well as you did love the world. You were never weary of serving the world, but you do soon get weary of serving Me”? O my poor Heart, wake up! Wake up! What are you doing, to have served sin at such a rate, and then to serve Christ so little?

Another question may be to the point. How do you serve yourselves? You are in business, some of you, and I like to see a man of business with his hands full and his wits about him. Your drones, those indolent fellows who go about the shop half asleep, and seem as if they never did wake up, what is the use of them? Men who seem to cumber the earth, men who never did see a snail unless they happened to meet one, for they could not have overtaken it, they travel so slowly—such men are or little use to God or man. I know that the most of you are diligent in business. You never hear the ring of a guinea without being on the alert to earn it if possible.

Your coats are off, and very likely your shirtsleeves are turned up when there is a chance of driving trade. That I commend. But oh, do let us have something like it in the service of Jesus Christ! Do not let us be drudging in the world, and drawling in the Church—lively in the service of mammon, and then laggard in the service of Christ! Heart and soul, manliness, vigor, vehemence—let the utmost strain of all our powers be put forth in the service of Him who was never prone to be slow in the service of our souls when they had to be redeemed.

I shall not keep you much longer, but still pressing the same question, let me ask you, dear Friends, how do you think such service as you have rendered will look when you come to see it by the light of eternity? Oh, nothing of life will be worth having lived, when we come to die, except that part of it which was devoted and consecrated to Christ. Live, then, with your deathbeds in immediate prospect. Live in the light of the next world so your pulse will be quickened, and your heart excited in the Master’s service.

I now put the question, What shall we render? What shall I render unto the Lord? Let the question go all round the pews, and let everybody answer, What shall I render? Is there any new thing I can do for Christ that I never did before? Cannot I speak a word for Christ to somebody tonight? Tonight, because you cannot overtake the loss of a single opportunity. Tomorrow’s mercies will bring tomorrow’s obligations. Today’s obligations must be discharged today. What shall I render tonight? Is there anybody I can speak to of Jesus before I retire to my chamber? It is a little thing, but let me do it! What shall I render? Let me give my God praise tonight somehow.

There is the communion table around which we are about to gather. That may help me to render Him some homage. I will there take the cup of salvation, and call upon His name. Tomorrow I shall be in the world going forth to my labors. What shall I render? I will consecrate part of my substance to God, but I will try to consecrate all tomorrow and next day to Him. While I am at my work, if I use a saw, or use a hammer, or if I stand at a counter, or in the fields, or in the streets I will ask that my thoughts may be on God—that I may be kept from sin, and that by my example I may render some tribute of honor to His name in the sight of my fellow men. And I will try to seize every opportunity that comes in my way of telling—

*“To sinner round,  
What a dear Savior I have found.”*  
And yet, dear Friends, it is not for me to answer the question that is propounded for you. With these few brief hints I do put the question in all its touching pathos, in all its deep solemnity, in all its momentous gravity, be

fore every Christian man and woman here—and I cite you to answer it before the Searcher of all hearts—“What shall I render?” Thrice happy you who respond in lip and life to the urgent call! “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end that you are not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

As for those of you, my Hearers, who are not yet converted—you who are not saved—this is not the question for you. Your question is, “What must I do to be saved?” and the answer is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” O believe on Him tonight! Trust Him—that is the point—trust Jesus Christ. You may come to Him and be saved at once. Then, not till then, you will begin to serve Him. May God bless you, my dear Friends, every one of you, for Christ’s sake.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1036 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRECIOUS DEATHS  
NO. 1036

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 18, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Psalm 116:15.**

DAVID sought deliverance from imminent peril and he felt sure of obtaining it, for being a servant of the Lord he knew that his life was too precious in the sight of God for it to be lightly brought to an end. It should be a source of consolation to all tried saints that God will not deliver them over to the hands of their enemies. It is not the will of their Father who is in Heaven that one of His little ones should perish. A shepherd who did not care for his sheep might suffer the wolf to devour it, but he who prizes it highly will put his own life in jeopardy to pluck the defenseless one from between the monster’s jaws.

The text informs us that the deaths of God’s saints are precious to Him. How different, then, is the estimate of human life which God forms from that which has ruled the minds of great warriors and mighty conquerors. Had Napoleon spoken forth his mind about the lives of men in the day of battle, he would have likened them to so much water spilt upon the ground. To win a victory or subdue a province—it mattered not though he strewed the ground with corpses thick as autumn leaves—nor did it matter though in every village orphans and widows wailed the loss of sires and husbands. What were the deaths of conscript peasants when compared with the fame of the Emperor? So long as Austria was humbled, or Russia invaded, little cared the imperial Corsican though half the race had perished.

Not thus is it with the King of kings! He spares the poor and needy and saves the souls of the needy. And precious shall their blood be in His sight. Our glorious Leader never squanders the lives of His soldiers. He values the Church militant beyond all price. And though He permits His saints to lay down their lives for His sake, yet is not one life spent in vain or unnecessarily expended. How different, also, is the Lord’s estimate from that of persecutors! They have hounded the saints to death, considering that they did God a service. They have thought no more of burning martyrs than destroying noxious insects—and massacres of Believers have been to them as the slaying of wild beasts.

Did they not strike a medal to celebrate the massacre of the Huguenots in France? And did not the infallible Pope, himself, consider it to be a business for which to offer Te Deums to God? What if murder made the streets of Paris run with blood?—the slaughtered ones were only Protestants and the world thought itself well rid of them. Foxes and wolves and Protestants were best exterminated! As for so-called Anabaptists—they were counted worse than vipers and to crush them utterly was reckoned to be a salutary Christian discipline! The enemies of the Church of God have hunted the saints as if they were beasts of the chase. They have let loose upon them the dogs of war and the hellhounds of the Inquisition as if they were not fit to live.

“Away with such a fellow from the earth” has been the general cry of persecutors against the men of whom the world was not worthy. But, precious is their blood in His sight. Though they have been cast to the beasts in the amphitheatre, or dragged to death by wild horses, or murdered in dungeons, or slaughtered among the snows of the Alps, or made to fatten Smithfield with their gore—precious has their blood been and still is in His sight. He will avenge His elect when the day shall come for His patience to have had her perfect work, and for His

 justice to begin her dread assize!

The text, also, corrects another estimate, namely, our own. We love the people of God—they are exceedingly precious to us, and therefore we are too apt to look upon their deaths as a very grievous loss. We would never let them die at all if we could help it. If it were in our power to confer immortality upon our beloved Christian Brothers and Sisters, we should surely do it—and to their injury we should detain them here, in this wilderness—depriving them of a speedy entrance into their inheritance on the other side the river! It would be cruel to them, but I fear we should often be guilty of it. We should hold them here a little longer, and a little longer yet, finding it hard to relinquish our grasp.

The departures of the saints cause us many a pang. We fret, also—we even repine and murmur. We count that we are the poorer because of the eternal enriching of those beloved ones who have gone over to the majority and entered into their rest! Be it known that while we are sorrowing, Christ is rejoicing! His prayer is, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am.” And in the advent of every one of His own people to the skies He sees an answer to that prayer, and is, therefore, glad. He beholds in every perfected one another portion of the reward for the travail of His soul and He is satisfied in it. We are grieving here, but He is rejoicing there!

Dolorous are their deaths in our sight, but precious are their deaths in His sight. We hang up the mournful escutcheon and sit down to mourn our full, and yet, meanwhile, the bells of Heaven are ringing, for “the bridal feast above”—the streamers are floating joyously in every heavenly street—and the celestial world keeps holiday because another heir of Heaven has entered upon his heritage! May this correct our grief. Tears are permitted to us, but they must glisten in the light of faith and hope. Jesus wept, but Jesus never repined. We, too, may weep, but not as those who are without hope, nor as though forgetful that there is greater cause for joy than for sorrow in the departure of our Brethren.

I. Coming, now, to the instructive text before us, we shall remark, in the first place, that THE STATEMENT HERE MADE IMPLIES A VIEW OF DEATH OF A PECULIAR KIND. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Death in itself cannot be precious—it is terrible. It cannot be a precious thing to God to see the noblest works of His hands torn in pieces, His skillful embroidery in the human body torn, defiled, and given over to decay. Death in itself cannot be a theme for rejoicing with God.

But death in the case of Believers is another matter. To them, it is not death to die—it is a departure out of this world unto the Father—a being unclothed that we may be clothed! It is a falling asleep—an entrance into the Kingdom. To the saint death is by no means such a thing as happens unto the unregenerate. And observe where this change lies. It lies mainly in the fact that death is no more the indication of a penalty for sin upon the Believer. One great cardinal Truth of the Gospel is that the sins of Believers were laid upon Christ and were punished upon Christ, and that, consequently, no sin is imputed to the Believer, neither can any be penally visited upon him. His sin was punished in his Substitute. The righteous wrath of God has altogether ceased towards those for whom Christ died. It could not be consistent with justice that the death penalty should be executed upon Christ and then should be again visited upon those for whom Christ was a Substitute.

Death, then, does not come to me as a Believer because I deserve it and must be punished by it—it comes so to the ungodly—it is upon them a fit visitation for their iniquities, the beginning of an unending death which shall be their perpetual portion. To the saints the sting of death is gone and the victory of the grave is removed. It is no more a penalty but a privilege to die! What if I say it is a Covenant blessing? Paul so esteemed it, for when he said, “All things are yours, things present or things to come,” he added, “or life, or death, all are yours. And you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s”— as if the Believer’s death came to him among other good and precious things by the way of his being Christ’s and Christ’s being God’s.

To fall asleep in Jesus is a blessing of the Covenant—it is a Grace to be asked for! “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word.” I would not miss it! If I might make my choice between living till Christ comes, so as to be changed only, and not to die, or of actually sleeping in the dust, I would prefer to die—for in this the Believer who shall fall asleep will be the more closely conformed to Christ Jesus! He will have passed into the sepulcher and slept in the tomb as his Master did. He will know, as Jesus knows, what death pangs mean and what it is to gaze upon the invisible, while the visible retreats into the distance. No, let us die. The Head has traversed the valley of death-shade—let the members rejoice to follow—

*“As the Lord their Savior rose,  
So all His followers must.”*

And, therefore, as the Lord the Savior slept, so let us sleep. When we think of our Master in the tomb, our hearts say, “Let us go that we may die with Him.” We would not be divided from Him in life or in death. We are so wedded to Him that we say, “Where You go I will go, where You die I will die, and with You would I be buried that with You in the resurrection morning I may be partaker of the resurrection.” Death, then, is so far changed in its aspect as it respects the saints that it is no longer a legal infliction, but it comes to us as a Covenant blessing conforming us to Christ. The statement of the text refutes the gloomy thought that death is a ceasing to be. It is not the annihilation of a man, nor ought it ever to be regarded as such!

In all ages there has fingered upon mankind the fear that to die may involve ceasing to be—and of all thoughts this is one of the most gloomy. But, when God says that the death of a Believer is precious to Him it is clear that no tinge of annihilation is in the idea, for where would be the preciousness of a Believer ceasing to exist? Oh, no! The thought is gone from us! We know that to die is not to renounce existence. We understand that death is but a passage into a higher and a nobler existence. The soul emancipated from all sinfulness passes the Jordan and is presented without fault before the Throne of God. No purgatorial fires are needed to cleanse her—the same day she leaves the body she is with Christ in Paradise, because she is fit to be there!

The body in death, it is true, undergoes decay, but even for that meaner part of our manhood there is no destruction. Let us not malign the grave—it is no more a prison, but an inn—a halting place upon the road to resurrection! As Esther bathed herself in spices that she might be fit for the embraces of the king, so is the body purged from its corruption that it may rise immortal—

*“Corruption, earth, and worms  
Shall but refine this flesh  
Till my triumphant spirit comes  
To put it on afresh.”*  
The body could not rise if it had not first died! It could not spring up like a fair flower unless it had first been sown. If a grain of wheat falls not into the ground and dies, how can it spring up again? And the body is sown in dishonor that it may be raised in honor. It is sown in weakness that it may be raised in power. It is laid in the grave as a natural body that it may arise, by the infinite power of the Almighty, a spiritual body, full of life, and glory, and majesty!  
Let this mortal body die, yes, let it mold into dust! What more fit than earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes? Let the gold go into the refining pot—it will lose none of its preciousness—it will only be delivered from its dross. Let the gem go to the lapidary’s house, for it shall glitter the more brightly in the royal crown in the day when the Lord shall make up His jewels! Death, too, we may be sure from this statement, cannot be any serious detriment to the Believer. It cannot be any serious loss to a saint to die. Looking upon the poor corpse, it does seem to be a catastrophe for Death to have passed his cold hand across the brow. But it is not so, for the very death is precious in the sight of the Lord! Therefore it is no calamity. Death, if rightly viewed, is a blessing from the Lord’s hand.  
A child once found a bird’s nest in which were eggs, which it looked upon as a great treasure. It left them, and by-and-by, when a week or so had passed, went back again. It returned to its mother grieving. “Mother,” said the child, “I had some beautiful eggs in this nest, and now they are destroyed. Nothing is left but a few pieces of broken shell. Pity me, mother, for my treasure is gone.” But the mother said, “Child, here is no destruction! There were little birds within those eggs and they have flown away and are singing now among the branches of the trees. The eggs are not wasted, Child, but have answered their purpose. It is better far as it is.”  
So, when we look at our departed ones, we are apt to say, “And is this all you have left us? Ruthless Spoiler, are these ashes all?” But, Faith whispers “No, the shell is broken, but among the birds of Paradise, singing among beautiful arbors, you shall find the spirits of your beloved ones—their true manhood is not here but has ascended to their Father, God.” It is not a loss to die! It is a gain, a lasting, perpetual and illimitable gain! The man is at one moment weak and cannot move a finger—in an instant he is clothed with power! Call you not this a gain? That brow is aching—it shall wear a crown within the next few ticks of the clock! Is that not gain? That hand is palsied—it shall at once wave the palm branch! Is that a loss?  
The man is sick beyond physician’s power but he shall be where the inhabitant is never sick! Is that a loss? When Baxter lay dying and his friends came to see him, almost the last word he said was in answer to the question, “Dear Mr. Baxter, how are you?” “Almost well,” he said, and so it is. Death cures! It is the best medicine, for they who die are not only almost well, but healed forever! You will see, then, that the statement of our text implies that the aspect of death is altogether altered from that appearance in which men commonly behold it. Death to the saints is not a penalty, it is not destruction, it is not even a loss!

II. But now, secondly, I need your earnest thought for a further consideration of the text. THE STATEMENT HERE MADE IS OF A MOST UNLIMITED KIND. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” It is a broad statement, wide and comprehensive, and I need you to observe that there is no limit here as to whom. Provided that the dying one is a saint, his death is precious. He may be the greatest in the Church or he may be the least. He may be the boldest confessor or he may be the most timid trembler—if a saint, his death is precious in God’s sight. I can well conceive the truth of this in respect to martyrs—to see a man enduring torments but refusing to deny his Lord—to behold him offered life and wealth if he will recant but to hear him say, “I cannot and I will not draw back, by the help of God.” To mark every nerve throbbing with anguish and every single member of his body torn with torment—and yet to see the man faithful to his God even to the close—why, this is a spectacle which God Himself might well count precious! The Church embalms the memories of her martyrs wherever they die—precious in God’s sight must their deaths be!  
The deaths, too, of those who work for Christ until at last weary nature gives out—when body and brain are both exhausted and the man can no longer continue in his beloved labor, but lays down his body and his charge together, never putting off harness until he puts off his flesh—I think the deaths of such men must be precious in God’s sight. But, not more so, mark—not more so than the departure of the patient sufferer, scarcely able to say a word, solitary and unknown—only able to serve God by submissively enduring pains which make night weary and day intolerable! Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of the consumptive girl who gradually melts into Heaven. The death of the pauper in the workhouse without a friend, but uncomplainingly bearing God’s will, is as precious, (not, perhaps, under some aspects), but as truly precious in the sight of the Lord as that of the most useful preacher of the Word. Precious to Jehovah is the death of the least in the ranks, as the death of those who rush to the front and bear the brunt of the battle! There are no distinctions in the text. If you are a saint, though no one may know you—you may be too poor and too illiterate to be of much account in the world. You may die and pass away and no record may be among the sons of men—no stone set up over your lonely grave—but precious in the sight of the Lord, in every case, is the death of His saints! There is no limit as to whom. And, mark you, there is no limit at all as to when. It matters not at what age the saint dies, his death is precious to God. Very delightful to those who observe them are the deathbed scenes of young children who have early been converted to God.  
There is a peculiar charm about the pious prattler’s departing utterances. He can hardly pronounce his words aright, but he seems illuminated from above. He talks of Jesus and His angels, and the harps of gold, and the better land as if he had been there! Some of you have had the privilege to carry in your bosoms some of those little ones for the skies—unfledged angels sent here but for a little while and then caught away to Heaven that their mothers’ hearts might follow them, and their fathers’ aspirations might pursue them. I confess to a great liking for such books as Janeway’s “Token for Children,” where the deaths of many pious boys and girls are recorded with the holy sayings which they used. The Lord sets a high value on His little ones, and therefore frequently gathers them while they are like flowers in the bud. When these favored children die, Jesus stands at their little cots, and while He calls them away, He whispers, “Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.”  
Equally precious, however, are the deaths of those who depart in middle life. These we usually regret most of all because of the terrible blanks which they leave behind them. What? Shall the hero fall when the battle needs him most? Shall the reaper be sent home and made to lay down his sickle just when the harvest is heaviest and the day requires every worker? To us it seems strange, but to God it is precious! Oh, could we lift the veil—could we understand what now we see not—we should perceive that it was better for the saints to die when they died than it would have been for them to have lived longer. Though the widow mourns and the orphans are left penniless, it was good that the father fell asleep. Though a loving Church gathered round the hearse and mourned that their minister had been taken away in the fullness of his vigor, it was best that God should take him to Himself.  
Let us be persuaded of this, that no Believer dies an untimely death. In every consistent Christian’s case that promise is true, “With long life, also, will I satisfy him and show him My salvation”—for long life is not to be reckoned by years as men count them. He lives longest who lives best. Many a man has crowded half a century into a single year. God gives His people life, not as the clock ticks, but as He helps them to serve Him—and He can make them to live much in a short space of time. There are no untimely figs gathered into God’s basket! The great Master of the vineyard plucks the grapes when they are ripe and ready to be taken, and not before. Saintly deaths are precious in His sight.  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord’s Providence permits the saint to live to a good old age, then is his death precious, too. The decease which has lately occurred among us will abide in my memory as one of my choice treasures. I say but little of it today, for on another Sunday morning I may be able to tell you some of those choice things which our dear brother and venerated elder uttered which charmed and gladdened us all as we lingered about his bed. You knew him. You knew what a man he was in life—he was just such a man in death. But a day or so before he died, while he could scarcely draw his breath, he told me with a smile that it was the happiest day of his life.  
As he was always desirous to rejoice in God while he was here among us, so he was kept in the same blessed spirit even to the end. “See,” he said, “what a blessed thing it is to be here.” “Here!” I said. “What? On a dying bed?” “Yes,” he said, “for I am Christ’s, and Christ is mine. I am in Him, and He is in me. What more could I have? It is the happiest day of my life,” and again he smiled serenely. It was all joy with him, all bliss with him. Pain might rack him, or weakness might prostrate him, but ever did his spirit magnify the Lord and rejoice in God his Savior. Yes, these ripe ones, like the fruits of autumn, fall willingly from off the tree of life when but a gentle breeze stirs the branches. The deaths of these are precious unto God. There is no limitation as to when.  
And, again, there is no limitation as to where. Precious shall their deaths be in His sight, let them happen where they may. Up in the lonely attic where there are none of the appliances of comfort, but all the marks of the deepest penury—up there where the dying work girl or the crossing sweeper dies—there is a sight most precious unto God! Or yonder, in the long corridor of the hospital where many are too engrossed in their own griefs to be able to shed a tear of sympathy—there passes away a triumphant spirit and precious is that death in God’s sight! Alone, utterly alone in the dead of night, surprised, unable to call in a helper, a saintly life often has passed away. But in that form also precious is the death in God’s sight! Far away from home and kindred, wandering in the backwoods or on the prairie, the Believer has died where there was none to call him Brother—but it mattered not—his death, too, was precious in the sight of the Lord.  
Or a bullet has brought the missive from the Throne which said, “Return and be with God,” and falling in the ditch to die among the wounded and the dead with no onlooker but the silent stars and blushing moon—amidst the carnage—the death of the believing soldier has been precious in the sight of Jehovah. Ah, and run over in the street, or crushed and bruised, and mangled in a railway accident, or stifled in the pit by the coal damp, or sinking amidst the gurgling waters of the ocean, or falling beneath the assassin’s knife—precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints! They are everywhere in the sight of God when they die, and He looks upon them with a smile, for their death is precious to His heart. There is no limit as to where.  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, there is no limit as to how. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Their deaths may happen suddenly. They may be alive, and active, and in a moment fall down dead—but their death is precious. I could never understand that prayer which is put into the Prayer Book, that God would deliver us from sudden death. Why, I think it is the most desirable death that a person could die, not to know you die at all! To have no fears, no shivering on the brink— but to be busy in your Master’s service here, and suddenly to stand in the white robe before His Throne in Heaven! Shutting the eyes to the scenes below and opening them in the scenes above! I know if I might ask such a favor, I would covet to die as a dear Brother in Christ died, who gave out this hymn from his pulpit—  
*“Father, I long, I faint to see  
The place of Your abode.  
I’d leave Your earthly courts, and flee  
Up to Your seat, my God.”*  
Just as he finished that line in the pulpit he bowed his head and his prayer was answered! He was immediately before the Throne of God! Is there anything in that to pray against? It seems to us much to be desired! But at any rate, such a death as that is precious in God’s sight! But if we linger long. If the tabernacle is taken down piece by piece, and the curtains are slowly folded up, and the tent pins gently put away— precious in the sight of the Lord is such a death as that. Should we die by a fierce disease which shakes the strong man, or by gentle decline which slowly saps and undermines, it matters not. Should a sudden stroke take us and men call it a judgment—it is no judgment to the Believer—for from him all judgments are past and the true light of love shines on him! Die

 how he may, and where he may, and when he may, and let him be in what position he will when he dies, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”  
III. And now, thirdly, coming to the very soul and marrow of the text, we notice that THE STATEMENT OF THE TEXT MAY BE FULLY SUSTAINED AND ACCOUNTED FOR. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,” is a most sober and truthful declaration. First, because their persons were, and always will be, precious unto God. His saints! Why, these are His elect! These are they upon whom His love was set before the mountains lifted their heads into the clouds! These are they whom He bought with precious blood, cheerfully laying down His life for their sakes! These are they whose names are borne on Jesus’ breast and engraved upon the palms of His hands! These are His children! These are members of His body! These are His bride, His spouse! He is married unto them! Therefore, everything that concerns them must be precious. Do I not look with interest upon the history of my child? Do I not carefully observe everything that happens to my beloved spouse? Where there is love, the little becomes great and what would seem a matter of no concern in a stranger is gilded with great importance. The Lord loves His people so intensely that the very hairs of their heads are numbered! His angels bear them up in their hands lest they dash their foot against a stone. And because they are the precious sons of Zion, comparable unto fine gold, therefore their deaths are precious unto the Lord! Precious are the deaths of God’s saints, next, because precious graces are in death very frequently tested and as frequently revealed and perfected. How could I know faith to be true faith if it would not stand a trial? The precious faith of God’s elect is proven to be such when it can bear the last ordeal of all—when the man can look grim Death in the face and yet not be staggered through unbelief. When he can gaze across the gulf, so often veiled in clouds, and yet not fear that he shall be able to leap over it and land in the Savior’s arms. Believe me, the faith which only plays with earthly joys and cannot endure the common trials of life, will soon be dissipated by the solemn trial of death. But that which a man can die with, that is faith, indeed.  
Faith, moreover, brings with it as its companions, an innumerable company of Divine Grace, among which chiefly are hope and love. Blessed is the man who can hope in God when heart and flesh are failing him, and can love the Lord even though He strike him with many pains, yes, even though He slay him! The death of the body is a crucible for our graces and much that we thought to be true Grace disappears in the furnace heat. But God counts the trials of our faith much more precious than that of gold, and therefore He counts deathbeds precious in His sight. Besides, how many Graces are revealed in dying hours? I have known plants of God’s right hand planting that had always been in the shade before, and yet they have enjoyed sunlight at last!  
They were silent spirits that had laid their finger on their lips throughout their lives but took them down and declared their love to Jesus just when they were departing! Like the swan, of whom the fable has it that it sings never till it comes to its end—so many a child of God has begun to sing in his last hours because he has done with the glooms of earth! He begins to sing here his swan song, intending to sing on forever and ever! You cannot tell what is in a man to the fullness of him till he is tried to the full. Therefore the last trial, inasmuch as it strips off earth-born imperfections and develops in us that which is of God—and brings to the front the real and the true, and throws to the back the superficial and the pretentious—is precious in God’s sight.  
“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,” for a third reason, because precious attributes are in dying moments gloriously illustrated. I refer now to the Divine attributes. In life and in death we prove the attribute of God’s righteousness—we find that He does not lie but is faithful to His Word. We learn the attribute of mercy—He is gentle and pitiful to us in the time of our weakness. We prove the attribute of His immutability—we find Him “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” There is scarcely a single Characteristic of the Divine Being which is not set out delightfully to the child of God and onlookers when the saint is departing.  
And the same is true of the promises as well as the attributes. Precious promises are illustrated upon dying beds. “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Who would have known the meaning of that to the fullest if he had not found that the Lord did not leave him when all else was gone? “When you pass through the river I will be with you.” Who could have known the depth of the Truth of God in that promise if saints did not pass through the last cold stream? “As your days so shall your strength be.” Who could have known to the fullest that promise if he had not seen the Believer triumphant on his dying day?  
“Yes, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff comfort me.” You may read commentaries upon that Psalm, but you will never value it so well as when you are in the valley yourself. My dear departed friend said to me, before I came away on one of my last visits, “Read me a Psalm, dear Pastor,” and I asked, “which one?” “There are many precious ones,” he said, “but as I get nearer to the time of my departure, I love the 23rd best, let us have that again.” “Why,” I said, “you know that by heart.” “Yes,” he said, “it is in my heart, too. It is most true and precious to me.” And is it not so? Yet you had not seen the 23rdPsalm to be a diamond of the purest water if you had not beheld its value to saints in their departing moments. “Precious,” again, “in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,” because the precious blood is glorified. It is memorable how saints turn to the Cross when they die. Not very often do you hear them speak of Christ in His Glory, then. It is of Christ, the Sufferer. Christ, the Substitute, that they then speak. And how they delight to roll under their tongue, as a sweet morsel, such texts as that one, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” With what delight do they speak about having trusted in Him years ago, and how gladly will they tell you that they have not been confounded. All their hope and all their confidence lie in the Crucified One alone, and they are persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed to Him. It ought to be the object of our lives to magnify the blood of Jesus and to speak well of it, and to recommend it to others.  
But oh, dear Soul, if you have no faith in Christ’s blood, one argument that ought to convince you of the sin of unbelief above all others, is this— that blood has afforded comfort when pains have been bitter and consolation when death has been imminent! Not in one case or a thousand, but in countless cases! Saints by myriads have died singing, for they have overcome the last enemy by the blood of the Lamb. Oh, you that were never washed in Jesus’ blood, I dread to think of your dying! What will you do without the Savior? Oh, how will you pass the terrors of that tremendous hour with no Advocate on high pleading for you there and no blood of Christ upon you pleading for you here. Oh, fly to that Cross! Rest in that Cross! Then will you live well and die well! But, without the blood you shall live uneasily and die wretchedly. God prevent it for His name’s sake!  
Again, the deaths of Believers are precious to God, because oftentimes precious utterances are given forth in the last moments. There are little volumes extant of the deathbed sayings of saints, and if ever I have mistaken the utterances of man for Inspiration, it has been when I have read some of these dying speeches. No one ever mistook the brilliant utterances of Shakespeare, or the wise sayings of Bacon, or the profound thoughts of Socrates for Scripture—everyone could see that they were earthy and of the earth. But have you ever caught yourself imagining that the saying of a dying man must have been borrowed from the Scriptures? And if you have searched for it you have not discovered it anywhere in the sacred pages! The voice has been so near akin to Inspiration, and so true, that if it had been permitted, you would have written it in your Bibles and made a new chapter there!  
Oh, what brave things do they tell of the heavenly world! What glorious speeches do they make! To some of them the veil has been thrown back and they have spoken of things not as yet seen. They have almost declared things which it were not lawful for men to utter, and, therefore, their speech has been broken and mysterious—like dark sayings upon a harp. We could hardly make out all they said, but we gathered that they were overwhelmed with Glory—that they were confounded with unutterable bliss, that they had seen and wished to tell but must not— they had heard and gladly would repeat but could not.  
“Did you not see the Glory?” they have said, and you have replied, “The sun shines upon you through yonder window.” They have shaken their heads, for they have seen a brightness not begotten of the sun. Then they have cried, “Do you not hear it?” And we should have supposed that a sound in the street attracted them, but all was the stillness of night! It was all silent—except to their ears which were ravished with the voices of harpers, harping with their harps. I shall never forget hearing a Brother, with whom I had often walked to preach the Gospel, say—  
*“And when you hear my eye strings break, How sweet my minutes roll!  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But Glory in my soul!”*  
It must have been a grand thing to hear good Harrington Evans say to his deacons, “Tell my people, tell them I am accepted in the Beloved.” Or, to hear John Rees say, “Christ in the Glory of His Person. Christ in the love of His heart. Christ in the power of His arm. This is the Rock I stand on, and now, Death, strike.” Departing saints have uttered brave things and rare things which have made us wish that we had been going away with them. And so have they made us long to see what they have seen, and to sit down and feast at their banquet!

The last reason I shall give why the death of a saint is precious is this— because it is a precious sheep folded, a precious sheaf harvested—a precious vessel which had been long at sea brought into harbor, a precious child which had been long at school to finish his training brought home to dwell in the Father’s House forever. God the Father sees the fruit of His eternal love at last gathered in. Jesus sees the purchase of His passion at last secured. The Holy Spirit sees the object of His continual workmanship at last perfected. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rejoice that now the blood-bought ones are free from all inbred sin and delivered from all temptation! The battle’s fought, the battle’s fought, and the victory is won forever!  
The commander’s eagle eye, as he surveys the plain, watches joyously the shock of battle as he sees that his victory is sure. But when at the last the fight culminates in one last assault—when the brave guards advance for the last attack, when the enemy gathers up all the shattered relics of his strength to make a last defense, when the army marches with sure and steady tramp to the last onslaught—then feels the warrior’s heart a stern overflowing joy. And as his veterans sweep their foes before them like chaff before the winnower’s fan and the adversaries melt away even as the altar fat consumes away in smoke, I see the commander exulting with beaming eye, and hear him rejoicing in that last shock of battle, for in another moment there shall be the shout of victory and the campaign shall be over and the adversary shall be trampled forever beneath his feet! King Jesus looks upon the death of His saints as the last struggle of their life-conflict. And when that is over it shall be said on earth, and sung in Heaven, “Your warfare is accomplished, your sin is pardoned, you have received of the Lord’s hand double for all your sins.” “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Sirs, are you His saints? Preacher, you speak to others—have you been sanctified unto God? Answer this in the silence of your soul. Officers of this Church—are you saints or mere professors? Members of this Church—are you truly saints, or are you hypocrites? You who sit in this congregation Sunday after Sunday—have you been washed in the blood of Jesus? Are you made saints, or are you still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity? Casual visitors to this House of Prayer—the same question would I press on you—are you saints of God? If not, earth and Hell combined, though they are both full of anguish, could not utter a shriek that should be shrill enough to set forth the woe unutterable of the death that shall surely come upon you! Oh, before that death overtakes you, fly to Jesus! Trust Him, trust Him now! Before this day’s sun goes down, cast yourself at the feet of the crucified Redeemer and live! The Lord grant it, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE EXETER-HALL SERMON TO YOUNG MEN  
NO. 1740

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL.

**“O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid; You have loosed my bonds.”  
Psalm 116:16.**

I HAVE been wondering whether I might correctly say that I would preach, tonight, as a young man to young men. It is precisely what I should like to do, but can I do it? You are young men, I see, to a very large extent, but I wonder whether I am a young man myself. I have two opinions upon it in my own mind. Sometimes I feel very old. When I look in the mirror and see the hairs that have turned white upon my head, I suspect that I cannot be a young man! When I feel weary with my work and worn with sickness, I am persuaded that years are having their effect upon me! Yet, when I recover from sickness I feel young again—and when cheerful spirits and vivacity return, I half hope that I may still be a young man. I must not, however, deceive myself, for when I come to calculate and tally all up, I confess that if youth is essential to membership with the Young Men’s Christian Association, I could not expect to be voted in.

I am a little under 50 and I am a grandfather—and so I do not think that I can call myself a young man. Very well! I will not take upon myself airs and pretend to be what I am not, nor will I claim to be quite in your position upon the life-chart. I am not old, however! I suppose that I am just in the middle passage and, as a man in the center of life, I may venture, tonight, to give some little instruction and advice to you who are at its beginning. I have received a lot of advice, myself, in former years, and have borne it pretty patiently. Everybody has advised me! I must honestly admit that I have not followed all their advice, or else I had not been here!

But now I think that I shall take my turn and see whether I may not give a little advice. And the advice, such as it is, shall come out of my own experience. I do not expect you to follow it blindly, for I have confessed that I have not always accepted everybody’s counsel, myself. Only give me a hearing! Gather the good of what I say into vessels and throw the bad away. Before I get quite away from being a young man, I will try to talk with those who so lately were my comrades—before I shake hands with the old men and ask for a seat among them—I would have a word with those who are coming upon the scene of action to fill our places!

I may honestly say, at the very beginning, that I want so to preach, tonight, that every man here who is not yet a servant of the Lord may, at least, desire to become one—and that very many may actually enlist in the service of our great Lord and Master on this very spot! Why not? I shall be thrice happy and they will be thrice happy, too, if such should be the case! I have taken a text which I can repeat on my own behalf as sincerely as the Psalmist could for himself—“O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid; You have loosed my bonds.”

I. I begin, then, dear young men, by COMMENDING THE SERVICE OF GOD TO YOU. I want you to enter it and, therefore, I commend it! When a young man starts in life, he is apt to enquire of an older person in this fashion—“I should like to get into such-and-such a business, but is it a good one? You have been in it for years, how do you find it?” He seeks the advice of a friend who will tell him all about it. Some will have to warn him that their trade is decaying and that there is nothing to be done in it. Others will say that their business is very trying and that if they could get out of it, they would! While another will answer for his work, “Well, I have found it all right. I must speak well of the bridge which has carried me over. I have been able to earn a living and I recommend you try it.”

I come here at this time on purpose to give my own experience and, therefore, I wish to say, concerning the service of the Lord, that I have never regretted that I entered it. Surely, at some time or other, in these 33 years since I put on Christ’s livery and became His servant, I would have found out the evil if there had been anything wrong in the religion of Jesus! At some time or other I would have discovered that there was a mistake and that I was under a delusion! But it has never been so. I have regretted many things which I have done, but I have never regretted that I gave my heart to Christ and became a servant of the Lord.

In times of deep depression—and I have had plenty of them—I have feared this and feared the other, but I have never had any suspicion of the goodness of my Master, the truth of His teaching, or the excellence of His service! Neither have I wished to go back to the service of Satan and sin. Mark you, if we had been mindful of the country from where we came, we have had many an opportunity to return. All sorts of enticements have assailed me and siren voices have often tried to lure me upon the rocks—but never, never, by God’s Grace, since the day in which I enlisted in Christ’s service have I said to myself, “I am sorry that I am a Christian. I am sorry that I serve the Lord.”

I think that I may, therefore, honestly, heartily and experimentally recommend to you the service which I have found so good. I have been a bad enough servant, but never had a servant so lovable a Master or so blessed a service! There is one thing, too, which will convince you that, in my judgment, the service of God is most desirable—I have great delight in seeing my children in the same service. When a man finds that a business is a bad one, you will not find him bringing up his boys to it. Now, the greatest desire of my heart for my sons was that they might become the servants of God. I never wished for them that they might be great or rich, but, oh, if they would but give their young hearts to Jesus! This I prayed for most heartily.

It was one of the happiest nights of my life when I baptized them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, upon profession of their faith! And now, while I am speaking to you, one is preaching in New Zealand and another at Greenwich—and my heart is glad that the Gospel which the father preaches, the sons are preaching, too! If my Lord’s service had been a hard one, I should have said to these lads, “Don’t you consider it. God is a hard Master, reaping where He has not sowed—I went into the service blindly—and I warn you to avoid it.” My conduct has been the reverse of this and thus I have given you hostages in the persons of my sons for my honest love to my Master and Lord!

I do, without reserve, commend to you the service of the Lord Jesus Christ! If you enter it, you will wish your sons and daughters to enter it— and it will be your ambition that to the latest generation all your house may fear and serve God. I would add this more of a personal testimony— so blessed is the service of God, that I would like to die in it! When I have been unable to preach through physical pain, I have taken my pen to write—and found much joy in making books for Jesus—and when my hand has been unable to wield the pen, I have wanted to talk about my Master to somebody or other, and I have tried to do so. I remember that David Brainerd, when he was very ill and could not preach to the Indians, was found sitting up in bed, teaching a little Indian boy his letters, that he might read the Bible. And so he said, “If I cannot serve God one way, I will, another. I will never leave off this blessed service.”

This is my personal resolve, and verily, there is no merit in it, for my Lord’s service is a delight. It is a great pleasure to have anything to do for our great Father and Friend. And, therefore, most affectionately, for your own good, I commend the service of God to you. I think of it now in the following lights and, therefore, I commend it to you for four reasons. To serve God is the most reasonable thing in the world! It was He that made you—should not your Creator have your service? It is He that supports you in being—should not that being be spent to His Glory? Oh, Sirs, if you had a cow or a dog, how long would you keep either of them if it were of no service to you?

Suppose it were a dog and it never fawned upon you, but followed at everybody else’s heel and never took notice of you—never acknowledged you as its master at all? Would you not soon tire of such a creature? Which of you would make an engine or devise any piece of machinery if you did not hope that it would be of some service to you? Now, God has made you—and a wonderful piece of mechanism is the body and a wondrous thing is the soul—and will you never obey Him with the body or think of Him with the mind? This is Jehovah’s own lament—“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel does not know. My people do not consider.”

To have lived to be 21 without God is a terrible robbery! How have you managed it? To have lived to be 30 or 40 and never to have paid any reverence to Him who has kept the breath in your nostrils—without which you would have been a loathsome carcass in the grave long ago—is a base injustice! How dare you continue in it? To have lived so long and, in addition to that, to have often insulted God; to have spoken against Him; to have profaned His day; to have neglected His Book; to have turned your back on the Son of His love—is not this enough? Will you not cease from such an evil course? Why, there are some men who cannot bear five minutes provocation, no, nor five seconds! It is “a word and a blow” with them—only the blow frequently comes first! But here is God provoked by the 20 years at a stretch—the 30, the 40, the 50 years right on—and yet He bears patiently with us! Is it not time that we render to Him our reasonable service? If He has made us; if He has redeemed us; if He has preserved us in being, it is but His due that we should be His servants!

And let me point out, next, that this is the most honorable service that ever was. Did you say, “Lord, I am Your servant”? I see, coming like a flash of light from Heaven, a bright spirit, and my imagination realizes his presence. There he stands, a living flame! It is a seraph, fresh from the Throne of God, and what does he say? “O Lord, I am Your servant!” Are you not glad to enter into such company as this? When cherubim and seraphim count it their glory to be the servants of God, what man among us will think it to be a mean office? A prince, an emperor—if he is a sinner against God—is but a dishwasher in the kitchen compared with the true nobleman who serves the Lord in poverty and toil! This is the highest style of service under Heaven—no courtier’s honor can rival it! Knights of the Garter or whatever else you like, lose their glories in comparison with the man whom God will call servant in the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! You are in grand company, young Friend, if you are a servant of God!

And let me note, again, that this service is full of benefits. If I had to engage in a trade, I would like to spend my time and strength in a pursuit which did no hurt to anybody and did good to many. Somehow, I do not think that I would like to deal in deadly weapons—certainly not in the accursed drink! I would sooner starve than earn my bread by selling that or anything else that would debase my fellow men and degrade them below the level of brute beasts! It is a grand thing, I think, if a young man can follow a calling in which he may do well for himself and be doing well to others at the same time. It is a fine thing to act as some have done who have not grown rich by grinding the faces of poor needle women, or by the wage of the servant behind the counter, but have lifted others up with them and, as they have advanced, those in their employment have advanced, also. That is a something worth living for in the lower sphere of things!

But he that becomes a servant of God is doing good all along, for there is no part of the service of God which can do any harm to anybody! The service of the Lord is all goodness. It is good for yourself and it is good for your fellow men—for what does God ask in His service but that we should love Him with all our heart—and that we love our neighbor as ourselves? He who does this, is truly serving God, by the help of His Spirit, and he is also greatly blessing men! I say, it is a most charitable work to engage in and, therefore, it is that I commend it to you—for its reasonableness, its honorableness and its goodness.

And there is another thought. It is the most remunerative work under Heaven. “Not always, today,” someone may say. Yet I venture to say, “Always today!” To serve God is remunerative now! How so? Certainly not in hard cash, as misers rightly call their gold, but in better material. A quiet conscience is better than gold! To know that you are doing good is something more sweet in life than to know that you are getting rich or famous! Have not some of us lived long enough to know that the greater part of the things of this world are so much froth upon the top of the cup, far better blown away, than preserved? The chief joy of life is to be right with yourself, your neighbor, your God. And he that gets right with God—what more does he need? He is paid for anything that he may suffer in the cause of God by his own peace of mind!

There was a martyr, once, in Switzerland, standing barefoot on the firewood and about to be burnt to death—no pleasant prospect for him. He accosted the magistrate who was superintending his execution and asked him to come near him. He said, “Will you please lay your hand upon my heart. I am about to die by fire. Lay your hand on my heart. If it beats any faster than it ordinarily beats, do not believe my religion.” The magistrate, with a palpitating heart, himself, and all in a tremble, laid his hand upon the martyr’s bosom and found that he was just as calm as if he were going to his bed rather than to the flames. That is a grand thing! To wear in your buttonhole that little flower called, “heart’s-ease,” and to have the jewel of contentment in your bosom—this is Heaven begun below—godliness is great gain to him that has it!

But, listen. I think that all that we can get in this world is paltry because we must leave it, or it must leave us in a very short time. I am now addressing a congregation of young men. Young men—but in how very short a time, if you all live—will your hair be powdered with the gray of age! In how brief an interval will the whole company now gathered in Exeter Hall be gathered in the grave! How short life is! How swift is time! The older we get, the faster years fly. Only that is worth my having which I can have forever! Only that is worth my grasping which death cannot tear out of my hands! The supreme reward of being a servant of God is hereafter!

And if, young man, you should serve God and you should meet with losses, here, for Christ’s sake, you may count these “light afflictions which are but for a moment,” and think them quite unworthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed—for there is a resurrection of the dead! There is a judgment to come! There is a life eternal! There is a Heaven of unutterable splendor! There is a place in that Heaven for everyone of us who become true servants of the living God. I think that I hear somebody saying, “Well, I do not want to be a servant.” You cannot help it, my Friend—you cannot help it. You must be a servant of somebody! “Then I will serve myself,” says one. Pardon me, brave Sir, if I whisper in your ear that if you serve yourself you will serve a fool!

The man who is the servant of himself—listen to this sentence—the man who is the servant of himself is the slave of a slave—and I cannot imagine a more degrading position for a man to be in than to be the slave of a slave! You will assuredly serve somebody. You will wear fetters, too, if you serve the master that most men choose. Oh, but look at this city—this city full of free men—do the most of them know real liberty? Look at this city full of “freethinkers!” Is there any man that thinks in chains like the man who calls himself a freethinker? Is there any man so credulous as the man that will not believe the Bible? He swallows a ton of difficulties and yet complains that we have swallowed an ounce of them! He has much more need of faith of a certain sort than we have, for skepticism has far harder problems than faith!

And look at the free-liver, what a bondage is his life! “Who has woe? Who has redness of eyes” but the slave of strong drink? Who has rottenness in the bones but the slave of his passions? Is there any wretch that ever tugged in the Spanish galley, or any bondsman beneath the sun that is half such a slave as he who will be led, tonight, by his lusts like a bull to the slaughter, going to his own damnation and even to the ruin of his body while he makes himself the victim of his own passions? If I must be a slave, I will be a slave to Turks or savages—but never to myself—for that were the nethermost abyss of degradation! You must be a servant to somebody—there is no getting through the world without it. And if you are the servant of yourself, your bondage will be terrible.

“Choose this day whom you will serve,” for serve you must. Every man must get to his task, whether he is peer or pauper, millionaire or beggar. Kings and queens are usually the most wearied servants of all. The higher men climb, the more they have to serve their fellow men. You must serve! Oh, that you would enter the service of your God! There is room in it. Other places are crowded. Hundreds of young men go from shop to shop and beg for the opportunity to earn a livelihood. I lament that in many instances they beg in vain. Some of you wear the boots off your feet in trying to get something to do—how anxiously do I desire that you may find the employment you seek! But there is room in the service of God—and He is willing to receive you.

And let me tell you, that if you enter His service, it will help you in everything that you have to do in this life. They say that a Christian man is a fool. Ah, proud opposers, though we say not the same to you, we might, perhaps, with truth, think so! I have seen many Believers in Jesus whom it would have been very dangerous to deal with as with fools, for very soon he that dealt with them in that fashion would have found that he made a great mistake. They are not always fools who are called so—they are such, sometimes, who use those names. I like a Christian man to be all the better in every respect for being a Christian. He should be a better servant and a better master. He should be a better tradesman and a better artisan. Surely, there is no poet whose masterly excels that of the poet of the sanctuary—Milton still sits alone.

There is no painter that should paint so well as he who tries with his brush to make immortal the memorable scenes in which great deeds were done. That which you can now do well you might do better by becoming a servant of God. Thus would I commend my Master’s service with all my heart. Are there any here who will enlist in it? If so, I have a second point to dwell on very briefly. I lift the flag and bid you rally to it, but first hear me patiently.

II. My second point is A WORD OF CAUTION. Did you notice that David said, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant.” “Truly.” The word of caution! If you become the servant of God, truly become the servant of God. God is not mocked. It is the curse of our Churches that we have so many merely nominal Christians in them. It is the plague of this age that so many put on Christ’s livery and yet never do Him a hand’s turn. Oh, if you serve God, mean it! If a man serves the devil, let him serve the devil! But if he serves God, let him serve God!

Some people serve their business very actively, but not their God. There was, years ago, a Brother who used to occasionally pray at the Prayer Meeting in a low tone, as if he had no lungs left. Seldom could you hear what he said and if you listened and strained your ears there was still nothing to hear. I thought that the Brother had a bad voice and so I never called on him to pray any more. But, stepping one day into his shop, I heard him say in a commanding voice, “John, fetch that half-hundred!” “Oh, dear!” I thought, “that is the kind of voice he has in his business, but when he comes into the service of God, that little squeak is all he can give.”

Laugh again, Sirs! Laugh again! It deserves to be laughed at! But is there not much of this hypocrisy abroad? God is to have the cheeseparings of a man’s life—and he flings these down as if they were all that God was worth? But as for the world, that is to have the vigor of his life and the cream of his being. God does not want nominal servants—nor do I invite them, in His name, tonight. “O Lord, truly I am Your servant,” said David. And he that does not mean to truly be God’s servant, let him not pretend to be one at all! If you would be God’s servant, then count the cost! You must leave all others. “You cannot serve God and mammon.” You cannot serve Christ and Belial. He is not God’s who is not God’s only.

You must also enter upon God’s service for life—not to be, off and on, sometimes God’s servant and sometimes not. Have you ever heard of the child who was asked by the district visitor, “Is your father a Christian?” The child replied, “Yes, Sir, Father is a Christian, but he is not doing much at it, just now.” Oh, how many Christians there are of that sort! They profess to be Christians, but they are not doing much at it. If you become the servant of God, you must be His servant every day and all day forever and ever—

*“‘Tis done, the great transaction’s done:*

*I am my Lord’s, and He is mine,”*  
must be a covenant declaration which must stand true throughout your entire life!

And if you become the servant of God, you must cease from every known sin. You cannot give one hand to Christ and another to Satan. You must give up your dearest sins. Sweet sin must become bitter. If sins are like right hands or right eyes, they must be cut off or plucked out! And you must follow Christ fully, giving Him all your heart, soul and strength. For if it is not so, you cannot be His disciple.

So much by way of caution. I was very brief on that, but take it as though it were said at length.  
III. I want, now, to OFFER COUNSEL IN THE MATTER OF DISTINCT CONFESSION IF YOU BECOME THE SERVANT OF CHRIST. “I am Your servant,” says David. And then he says it again, “I am Your servant.” Now, I want every young man here who is a Christian to make it known by an open avowal of his discipleship. I mean that there should not be one among us who follows the Lord Jesus Christ in a mean, sneaking, indistinct, questionable way. It has become the custom of many to try to be Christians and never say anything about it. This is beneath contempt!  
I urge you true servants of Christ to “out with it,” and never be ashamed! If ever a bold profession was required, it is required now. You may not be burned at the stake for saying that you are a Christian, but I believe that the old enmity to Christ is not removed and a true Believer will still be called upon to take up his cross. In many a house in London a young man will have to run the gauntlet if he is known to be a Christian. Run the gauntlet, then! You have an honorable opportunity. It is a grand thing to be permitted to endure reproach for Christ’s sake—you should look at it as a choice privilege that you are counted worthy, not only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but also to suffer for His sake!  
Nowadays the world needs decided men. Everywhere it seems to be imagined that you may believe what you like or believe nothing—and do as you like or do nothing—and the result will be all the same, both to the unbeliever and the man of faith. But it is not so! It is time for the out-andout servant of the Lord to put down his foot and say, “I have believed, therefore have I spoken. I am a Christian and while I leave you to your individual liberty, I mean to have mine! And I mean to exercise that liberty by being openly and unquestionably on the side of Christ and on the side of that which is pure, sober, right, true and good.” Is not this well deserved by Christ?  
Oh, if He never was ashamed of us, we ought never to be ashamed of Him! If the Lord of Life and Glory stooped to die for us, could we ever stoop at all, even if we rolled into the mire or dropped into the grave for Him? Surely, our blessed Lord deserves to be followed by heroes! Every man in the Presence of the Cross-bearing Jesus should feel that to take up his cross and follow Christ is the simplest and most natural thing that can be—and he should resolve, in God’s strength, that he will do it—and continue to obey the Lord, though all the world should ridicule him! Let me tell you that it is the easiest thing to do, after all! Compared with compromise, it is simplicity, itself.  
I have known many young Christians who have come up to London and they have determined that they would serve God if they could—but that they would keep it very quiet—and so they have attempted to be Christians on the sly. And they have failed! If you are a genuine Christian, it will be found out as surely as you are living! If you go down to Mitcham when the lavender is ripe, you may shut all your windows, but you will find that the perfume of the lavender will somehow get into your house! Christianity has a perfume about it which will spread abroad so that all in the house enquire, “What is all this?” The wicked wags will whisper that you are “a Christian young man”—and if you have not come out at the first, it will be very hard for you afterwards.  
Begin as you mean to go on, young man! Do not hide your flag and try to sail under false colors, for both good and bad will be against you in that case. You will be hunted from place to place if the dogs find that you will run—you will make rare sport for the hunters if you take to your heels! Come straight out and let them do their best or their worst. Live a most consistent life and the other young fellows will know where you are. They will soon reckon you up and if you are sincere, before long they will leave you alone—but if they do not, forbearance is still yours! If they continue to persecute you, so much the worse for them—for you, by your quiet, holy life, will make them feel that it is hard for them to kick against the pricks! But, anyhow, do come out bravely.  
Some of you young fellows are like rats behind the wainscot—you do not mind going out at night to eat the crumbs on the floor—but there you are, back again directly. I mean that you will join in religious exercises if it is not known to the shop, but you would not, for the world, become suspected of real religion! Is that how true Christians should act? No! Put on your livery! “But I do not care about joining a Church,” says one. Very likely. But do you not know that it is found to be a convenient and proper thing in warfare that a soldier should wear a uniform? At first, Oliver Cromwell’s Ironsides were dressed anyway and everyway. But in the melee with the Cavaliers it sometimes happened that an Ironsides was struck down by mistake by the sword of one of his own brethren and so the general said, “You wear red coats, all of you. We must know our own men from the enemy.” What Cromwell said, he meant, and they had to come in their red coats, for it is found essential in warfare that men should be known by some kind of uniform.  
Now, you that are Christ’s, do not go about as if you were ashamed of His Majesty’s service! Put on your red coats—I mean come out as acknowledged Christians! Unite with a body of Christian people and be distinctly known to be Christ’s. How are the ordinances of the Lord’s house to be sustained if every man is to go to Heaven, alone, by the back way? Come out boldly! If any man wants to laugh at a Christian, step out and say, “Laugh at me! If anybody wants to abuse a fellow and call him a hypocrite, a Presbyterian, a Methodist, come on! I am ready for you.” If you have once done that and come right out on the straight, you shall find it the easiest thing in life to bear the reproach of Christ! And oh, remember, young men, that if you should meet with any reproach for Christ, a reward awaits you.

Shall I tell you a parable? There was once a king’s son who went upon a journey, incognito, and he journeyed into a far country. And there he was ill-treated and, because of his language and his appearance, the people of the land set him in the pillory, which was, of old, the place of scorn. They set him there and the mob gathered round him and threw all kinds of filth and garbage upon him. This unknown prince was thus pelted and made as the offscouring of all things. But there was, among them, one man who loved the prince and who recognized him—and determined to bear him company. He mounted the pillory and stood by his side! He wiped his face with his handkerchief and whenever he could, he put himself in the way of the mire and dirt, that he might catch it and screen the prince from it.  
Years went on and it came to pass that the prince was back in his kingdom in all his glory. And the courtiers were standing round about the throne. This man who had been a poor man in his own country was summoned to the court and when he arrived at the palace, the prince saw him and said to the peers of the realm, “Stand aside and make way for this man. He was with me when I was ill-treated and scorned—and now he shall be with me in my glory, chief among you here.” Do you not know the story of how our sweet Lord Jesus came down to earth and suffered many things, and how He was despised and rejected of men?  
Young man, are you the man who would wipe His blessed face, share His shame and take half turns with the Man of Nazareth in all His disgrace and scorn? Are you that man? Then there shall come a day when the great Father, on His Throne, shall spy you out and say, “Make a lane, you angels! Stand back, seraphim and cherubim! Make way for this man! He was with My Son in His humiliation, and now he shall be with Him in His Glory.” Will you receive that mark of honor? Not unless you are prepared to put on the badge of Christ and say, “I am His servant and His follower from this day to life’s end.” God help you to do it! O Holy Spirit, lead scores of young men to shoulder the Cross!  
IV. And so, lest I weary you, I CLOSE BY CONGRATULATING SOME OF YOU who are God’s servants, UPON YOUR FREEDOM, for that is the last part of the text. “Truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid; You have loosed my bonds.” Oh, but this is a grand thing—this loosing of the bonds! Were you ever in bonds? Did you ever feel the bonds of guilt? Are you believing in Christ? Then those bonds are loosed, for your sin is forgiven you for Christ’s sake and you are delivered from all condemnation! Oh, will you not love Him who has loosed your bonds? Were you, dear Friend, ever in the bonds of despondency and despair on account of sin? Did you ever sit and sigh because you thought that there was no salvation for you? And did the Lord Jesus Christ appear to you as your crucified Savior? And did you trust in Him and feel the bond of despondency broken? Happy day for you!  
I remember it well, myself! Oh, then, will you not follow Him that has loosed your bonds? You are now delivered from the bonds of guilt and despair! You are also saved from the power of sin! The habits that were your masters are now destroyed! The lusts that lorded over you are now slain and you are free! Will you not wish to be bound to Christ from now on because He has loosed your bonds? I know some men in this world who talk a great deal about being free, but they are always in chains. There is a man I know for whom the devil makes a nauseous mixture—at least to me it is very nauseous—and he says, “Drink a quart of it,” and he drinks. “Drink another,” says the devil, and he does so. “Drink another,” says the devil, and his brain begins to reel and he is all on fire. “Drink it,” says the devil, and he lets it run down his throat—he is in chains!  
I know another who, against his better self, will go into sin which he knows to be sin—and knows to be injurious to him. Yet he goes in a silly manner and harms himself more and more. He is led by the nose by the devil! He says that he cannot resist—he is a slave in the worst sense! Oh, blessed is the man who can say, “You have loosed my bonds: no evil habit now enslaves me! No passion controls me, no lust enchains me!” Young Friend, if you can stand up and say, “I am free from myself—I am no longer the slave of sin!”—you are a blessed man and you may well be God’s servant forever! What a mercy it is to be delivered from the bonds of the fear of man! Some young men dare not call their souls their own for fear of their employers. A great many more are dreadfully in fear of the young man who sleeps in the next bed. Oh, dear, they dare not do what is right!  
Poor babies that they are, they must ask permission to keep a conscience! When they are about to do anything, they are always saying, “What will So-and-So think of it?” Does it matter to any true man what all the world thinks about him? Has he not risen out of that? Is he still a serf? “Go,” says the brave man, “think what you will, and say what you will. If I serve God, I am no servant of yours! By your censures I shall not fail, as by your praises I shall not rise.” Be afraid of such a thing as this and ask the leave of another man what I shall think, what I shall believe, what I shall do! I will die first! When God brings a man to know Him, and to be His servant, He sets him free from this cowardly crime of being afraid of a man that shall die! So, too, He sets him free from all the maxims and customs of the world.  
Young man, when you go into business, they will tell you that you must do such-and-such because it is “the custom of the trade.” “Why,” you say, “it is lying!” You will be told that it is not exactly lying because your customer is used to your tricks and quite understands that a hundred means 80, and the best quality means a second-class article. I am told that half the business in London is robbery in some form or another if the customs of the trade are not understood. If it is so that it is all understood, it might just as well be done honestly—and it would pay as well! Yet, somehow, men feel as if they must do what others have done, or else they will be out of the race. Slaves! Serfs! Be honest! He is not free that dares not be honest! Shall I not speak my mind? Shall I not act out my integrity? If I cannot, then I cannot say with David, “You have loosed my bonds.”  
Lastly, what a blessing it is when God frees us from the fear of death! “You have loosed my bonds.” What will it matter to you, young man, if you become the servant of God by faith in Jesus Christ, whether you live or die? If you die early, so much the sooner in Heaven! If you live long, so much the longer in which to serve your God on earth! Give your heart to Christ! Trust your salvation in those dear hands that were pierced for sinners and thus become the servant of God—and you shall be provided for— for His children shall not lack. You shall be led, guided, taught, educated, prepared for Heaven! And one of these bright days a convoy of celestial spirits shall think it an honor to be permitted to bear your joyful spirit up to the Throne of God!  
Who will be the servant of the Most High, then? I always wish, when I have done with sermons, that I could preach them over again because I have not done well enough. But all I care to preach for is that I may touch your hearts. I would not care a snap of the fingers to be an orator, or to speak pretty sentences. I want to put forward the Truth of God so that some young man will say, “I will serve God.” I remember young men that began life when I began, that are now—I will not say what. Ah! I remember hearing their names mentioned as models! They were such fine young men and had just gone up to London. Yes, and they are, tonight, if not in jail, in the workhouse!  
It all came about in this way—the young man sent word home to his mother what the text was on Sunday, yet he had not been to hear a sermon at all. He had been to some amusement to spend a happy day— wherever he went, he had neglected the House of God and, by-and-by, there was a little wrong in his small accounts—just a little matter. But that man could not pick himself up, again, having once lost his character. There was another. There was nothing wrong in his accounts, but his habits were loose. By-and-by he was ill. Who could wonder? When a man plays with edged tools, he is very likely to cut himself. It was not long before he was so sickly that he could not attend to business and, before long, he died. And they said—I fear it was true—that he killed himself by vice. And that is how thousands do in London.  
Oh, if you become the servant of God, this will not happen to you! You may not be rich; you may not be famous; you may not be great—you need not desire these things—full often they are gilded vanities. But to be a man to the fullness of your manhood; to be free and dare to look every other man in the world in the face and speak the truth and do the right. To be a man that can look God in the face because Christ has covered him with His glorious righteousness—this is the ambition with which I would fire the spirit of every young man before me! And I pray God that the flame may burn in his life by the power of the Divine Spirit.  
Come then, Brothers, bow your heads and say, “We will be servants of the living God henceforth and forever.” God grant it, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen and Amen!

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PERSONAL SERVICE  
NO. 312

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT SURREY CHAPEL, BLACK FRIAR’S ROAD, ON BEHALF OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

**“O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid; You have loosed my bonds.” Psalm 116:16.**

THESE sentences suggest a contrast. David’s religion was one of perfect liberty—“You have loosed my bonds.” It was one of complete service— “Truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid.” Did I say the text suggested a contrast? Indeed the two things need never be contrasted, for they are found to be but part of one Divine experience in the lives of all God’s people. The religion of Jesus is the religion of liberty. The true Believer can say, when his soul is in a healthy state, “You have loosed my bonds. The penal fetters with which my soul was once bound are all dashed to shivers. I am free!”

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The burdensome bonds of ceremonies are all cast to the winds. Henceforth the beggarly elements are trod under foot. Shadows have yielded to substance, and the type and the symbol cease to oppress. The true light now shines and the torches are quenched. “You have loosed my bonds”—that is to say, You have not only saved me from the penal consequences of my sin and from the heavy burden of the old Mosaic ceremonial law, but You have moreover delivered me from the spirit of bondage which once led me to serve You with the fear of an unwilling slave. You have taken the yoke from my neck and the goad from behind my back.

You have made me Your freed man. No more do I crouch at your feet or go to Your footstool cowering like a slave, but I came to You with privilege of access, up to Your very Throne. By the Spirit of adoption I cry, my Father, You do own the kindred. For by the same Spirit I am sealed to the day of redemption. Thus, O Lord, “You have loosed my bonds.” Nor if religion has had its full sway in us, is this all. You have loosed me from the bonds of worldly maxims. You have delivered me from the fear of man. You have rescued me from the stooping and fawning which made me once the slave of every tyrant who laid claim to my allegiance and You have made me now the servant of but one Master, whose service is perfect liberty.

Whereas before I spoke with bated breath, lest I should offend and even my condolence had continually to yield to the whims and prejudices of another man, behold now “You have loosed my bonds.” As an eagle with my eye on the sun, with wings outstretched true to the line upward

which I soar, bound no longer to the rocks of prejudice or the mounds of worldly maxim—free, entirely free to serve my God without hindrance! “You have loosed my bonds.”

Vast and wide is the liberty of the Believer. The Antinomian, when he assays to describe Gospel liberty, only can by forgetting that such liberty is consistent with the fullest service. But we enjoy all the liberty that even an Antinomian theology could offer. A liberty to be holy is a grander liberty than a license to be sinful A liberty to be conscientious. A liberty to know forgiven sin. A liberty to trample upon conquered lusts—this is an infinitely wider liberty than that which would permit me to be the comfortable slave of sin and yet indulge the delusive hope that I may one day enter the kingdom of Heaven. The largest expressions that can ever be used by the boldest minister of Free Grace cannot here be exaggerations.

Luther may exhaust his thunders and Calvin may spend his logic. Zwingli may utter his periods with fiery zeal—but after all the grand things that have been spoken about the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free—we are freer than those men knew. Free as the very air we breathe is the Christian, if he live up to his privileges. If he is in bondage at all, it is because he has not as yet yielded his spirit fully to the redeeming and emancipating influence of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the fullest and widest sense, therefore, the Believer may cry, “You have loosed my bonds.”

Nor is this liberty merely consistent with the most profound and most reverent service, but the service is, indeed, a main characteristic of the exalted freedom. “Truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid.” This does not relate with the sentence that follows it— “You have loosed my bonds.” This fact of my being God’s servant is to me a proof and evidence, and a delightful fruit and effect, of my having my bonds loosed by the great Emancipator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Service, then, as well as liberty!

Service is ordained to be a constant characteristic of the true religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. “We are not our own, we are bought with a price.” There is not a hair upon our head, there is not a passion in our spirit, there is not a single power or faculty in our mind which is our own. We are all bought—all purchased—we are all, every single particle of us, the purchased property of the Lord Jesus Christ—perfectly free and yet perfectly the property of Jesus—supremely blest with the widest liberty and yet in the fullest sense the property of another—the shackled servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. This service, my Brethren, it appears from the text, should be the—“O Lord, truly I am Your servant.”

I fear there is very much service of God that only lies in terms and words. Men sit and sing hymns, in which they cry—  
*“And if I might make some reserve,  
And duty did not call;  
I love my God with zeal so great,  
I’d freely give Him all.”*

But within an hour their nets belie their song. There is much of service in our own thought which never comes to service in net. I do not doubt but that we often compliment ourselves upon schemes we have devised, which fall dead to the ground like blasted figs, never having been carried into effect. We go to our chambers and bend our knees and Satan whispers some word of self-satisfaction to us, because we have some project on our soul, some device in our heart—though that project has never come to service, has only been an unborn intention, has never come into the life of an act.

I would that each one of us knew more fully the meaning of this word, “truly.” “O Lord, truly I am Your servant.” So truly that my enemies cannot dispute it—so truly that if they dare dispute it, my next action shall contradict them. So truly that never in any act of my life shall I give them reason to suppose the contrary. So truly Your servant, that my thoughts yield You obedience as well as my hands—my head as well as my heart— my heart as well as my feet. “Truly I am Your servant!” Not so in name and by profession, but so by actual deeds of holy endurance and of noble daring for you. “O Lord, truly I am Your servant.”

This service, it appears to me also from the text, is continual. “I am Your servant,” is the utterance at this moment. “I am Your servant,” is the utterance of the next. “I am Your servant,” is my utterance today. “I am Your servant,” will be my utterance when I come to die. Never should the Christian think that any other language will ever be on his lips anything less than traitorous. “I am Your servant,” is to be the exclamation of the man the moment his spirit knows its sins are forgiven. “I am Your servant” is to be his constant monitor when he stands exposed to temptation. It is to be his continual spur when idleness in a Laodicean spirit would make him lukewarm.

“I am Your servant” is to be his joy in the time of the hardest of labor. “I am Your servant” is to be his song in the time of the sternest suffering. Continually and ever we are the servants of God. We may change our masters upon earth, but our Master who is in Heaven is our Master forever We may cease to serve our country but we could not cease to serve our God. We may cease to be linked with any denomination, but we could not cease to be the servants of Christ. Even should it be possible for us to be so forgetful of our obligations as to dream for a moment of not being the servants of the Church, we could not harbor the thought that we should cease to be the servants of Christ.

“I am Your servant.” Let the next moment repeat it. Let the next hour echo it, let the next year continue to resound it. Let my whole life prolong it. And let eternity be a continuation of the solemn swell. “Truly, I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid; You have loosed my bonds.”

May I take the liberty now after offering you these few remarks by way of introduction as a sort of running commentary upon my text—may I take the liberty of concentrating your thoughts upon one particular, during the rest of my sermon? There is one important point which I wish to bring before this present audience, namely, the duty and the excellence of

personal service for their Lord and Master. I think I shall be warranted in confining my text, although it contains far more, to the repetition of that pronoun “I.” “Truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid. You have loosed my bonds.” The personality of the text seems to be conspicuous to allow me now to restrain myself to that one topic—the duty of the personal service of Christ.

I do feel at this peculiar season, when God has visited some parts of our land with rich revival and when we have reason to hope that revival will extend through this great city—I do feel just now that no topic can be more adapted to the times than the topic of personal service—personal consecration of every Christian to his Lord’s will.

This evening, then, I shall first speak upon the nature of personal service. Secondly, its reasonableness. Thirdly, its excellence. And in the last place, come to that which is no doubt upon your own minds—the special assistance which the Religious Tract Society yields to personal effort in the Redeemer’s kingdom.

I. First, then, THE NATURE OF PERSONAL SERVICE. Let me explain it by a contrast. The service of God among us has grown more and more a service by proxy. I would not be censorious. Judge what I say and if there is any measure of truth in it, let the truth come home to your soul. Do we not observe even in the outward worship of God, at times, a great attempt towards worship by proxy? Do we not often hear singing—certainly never in this place—but do we not often hear singing the praises of God confined to some five or six or more trained men and women who are to praise God for us?

Do we not sometimes have the dreary thought, when we are in our Churches and Chapels, that even the prayer is said and prayed by the minister for us? There is not always that hearty union in the one great prayer of the day which there should be whenever we are gathered together. The thought suggests itself continually to the thinking mind, “Is not much of the devotion confined to the minister and to those few who pass through the service?” In fact, we have actually degraded ourselves by applying the term “performance” to Divine worship.

“Performance!” A phrase begotten in the theater, which certainly should have spent its existence there, has actually been brought into the House of God and the services are nowadays “performed,” and the worship of God is gone through and the thing is called the “doing duty” of the minister and not the taking delight and the enjoying of a pleasure by the people. Do we not observe, too, that in an our Churches there is too much nowadays of serving God in acts of benevolence and acts of public instruction through the minister!

Your minister is supported. You expect him to discharge your duty for you. He is to be the means of converting sinners. He is to be the means of comforting the feeble minded. In fact, all the mass of duties that belong to the Church are considered to belong to the one man who is specially set apart to devote himself to the service of the ministry. Oh that this were rectified! Would to God that our people could all feel that no support of ministers can ever rid them of their own personal responsibility!

I think I speak in the name of all my Brethren in the ministry—we repudiate the idea of taking your responsibility upon ourselves. We find that our own work is more than we can perform without our Master’s strength. To come at last with clean hands before our Maker’s bar and to be able to say, “We are free from the blood of all men,” will have caused the most unremitting anxiety. We cannot take your work—we do not pretend to do so. If you have dreamed of it, forget the delusion and be rid of it once and for all. I will do no man’s duty but my own.

I will not attempt to stand sponsor to your remissness and take upon myself the sin of your sloth and lethargy. Nor will any minister of Christ for a moment think that his most arduous efforts and most self-denying exertions can for a moment acquit you of being guilty of the blood of souls, unless you, each of you, do personally the utmost that you can. A sorry contrast to this principle, I fear, is presented in many, many a Christian Church. You have put one man into the rank and he is to do all, while you are to sit still to be fed, to be edified, to be built up. As if you had nothing to do but to be stones and bricks that are to be built up—not living men and women—who are to spend and be spent in the Redeemer’s cause.

Having thus sought to exhibit by contrast, let me now illustrate the nature of this personal service by an actual picture. Look at the early days of Christendom—the Church’s pride and glory—when the purest air and the most refreshing dew were upon her mouth—then was the day of personal service. The moment a man was converted to God in those days, he became a preacher—perhaps, within a week, a martyr. Every man then was a witness—not here and there a bishop, or now and then a confessor—but every Christian, whether he moved in Caesar’s household, or whether he moved, like Lydia, in the pursuits of humble commerce—every Believer had a part in the service and sought to magnify the name of his Master.

Within but a few centuries after the death of Christ, the Cross had been uplifted in every land. The name of Jesus had been pronounced in every known dialect. Missionaries had passed through the deserts—had penetrated into the remote recesses of uncivilized countries. The whole earth was at least, nominally evangelized.

But what has befallen us now, my Brethren? The results of the labors of the Church through a space of years—what are they? They dribble into utter insignificance, when compared with the triumphs of the Apostolic times. My own conviction is that next to what I fear is the great cause— the absence of the Spirit’s influence—next to that and perhaps first of all, is the absence of personal agency in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ whereby the Spirit is manifested in the diversities of His operations. What conqueror or mighty warrior could expect to will a campaign if his troops should vote that one in a hundred should be supported by their rations— that one in a hundred should go to battle?

No, you legions! You must, every one of you, draw swords. Every heart must be stout and every arm must be strong. The line must not be composed of here and there a warrior and an interval between. Every man must march forward with the spirit of a lion and the strength of God, to do battle against the common enemy of souls. We shall never see great things in the world till we have all roused ourselves to our personal responsibilities. God will not give the honor of saving the world to His ministers. He meant it for His Church. And until His Church is prepared to grasp it, God will withhold the crown which He has prepared for her brow, and for hers alone, and which none but she can ever wear.

I think you may readily understand, then, what I mean by personal service. I mean this—if there are poor, it is not for you to subscribe to a society that shall send out paid agents for their relief. But as far as lies in you, personal service requires you visit them in their homes and with your own hands supply them the bounty of a Christian heart. It is not for you to say the City Mission supplies admirably a sufficient number of ministers. I may be idle. It is for you to instruct them. You are to be as a burning and a shining light in the midst of this dark generation. Personal service is for you. It is for you to say, “Though I am content with my minister’s labors, I cannot be content with my own. I must do more, and more and more. I desire to spend all that I have in Jesus Christ’s cause and not to keep back a single power which I possess, but to be continually the living servant of the living God.”

II. Having thus explained the nature of personal service, let me pass on to observe THE REASONABLENESS OF THIS PERSONAL SERVICE.  
Heir of Heaven, blood-bought and blood-washed, Jesus did not save you by another. He did not sit in Heaven Himself at ease and then array Gabriel in His power and might and send him down to suffer, bleed and die for you. But “He, His own Self”—mark the strong expression of Scripture—“His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
He might send out Apostles and seventy disciples to preach, but He never relaxed His service when He employed others. He might kindle other lights, but He did not quench his own. He was Himself your servant. He washed the disciples’ feet, not through the medium of another disciple, but with His own hands. They fed the hungry, but He Himself multiplied the fishes and broke the bread. He sent the Gospel into the world—not by missionaries—by Himself. He became His own preacher, His own expounder and then left the Truth of God to be taken up by others, when He Himself had ascended into Glory.  
By the streaming veins, then, of the Lord Jesus Christ. By the blessed body, which for your sake endured the curse—the curse of toil, aggravated till it became not the sweat of the face, but the sweat of the heart in very drops of blood—by these I hold the reasonableness of your personal service to Him. And, “I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”  
But, again, have you not a personal religion? You are not content with promises that are held in a sort of “joint stock” by the entire community. You long to have in your own heart the personal cry of adoption. Nothing but vital personal union to the Son of God can ever satisfy you. You are not content with a general election. You feel that you must have a personal election and a personal calling. You long to read your title clear to mansions in the skies. The charter of Free Grace, bright as it is, does not satisfy you unless you can see your name among its inheritors. All the broad acres of the promises cannot charm you unless you can walk over them and call them your own.  
You live—if you are a true Christian—you live upon the personal realization of your interest in that Covenant of Grace. What is more reasonable, then, that you should give personal service? Were I preaching to those who were dolts, this might be seen, and felt, too. But I speak to those who are wise men, because they have been taught of God, and I say, what can be a more logical conclusion than that personal benefits enjoyed and personal blessings received, should be reciprocated by personal services rendered?  
Further, let me remark to you that this personal service is reasonable, from the fact that personal service is the only kind of service at all available. I scarcely know whether you can serve God except by individual consecration. All that your minister can do is already due from him to God. You could not say before the eternal Throne, “Great God, I am Your servant, but I serve You by another.” Might He not reply, “That other was My servant, too”? Here is a man who has spent his whole life and whom you have felt to do so. Does he come before God and cry, “Great God, I have done all and I have a surplus left to supplement the dilatory character of my fellows?” No. When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. We have done no more than it was our duty to have done. How, then, can you by any means hope that you can serve God through us, when even ourselves feel we cannot reach the mark to which we would have aspired in our own personal service to Jesus?  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if you will but think of it, all your ideas of showing your gratitude to God by making another man carry your burden on his back is founded on idleness. It cannot be maintained in righteousness. More might I say, but I choose instead thereof to appeal to you thusly—does not the reasonableness of personal service strike you at once? If it does not, there was a time when it did. Before you were a child of God, there was a season when argument was quite unnecessary.  
Do you remember the time when your sins lay heavily upon your breast and you did cry both night end day, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Have you forgotten that glad hour when at the foot of Mercy’s Cross all the strings were loosed that bound that burden to your back and you were free? Have you forgotten, then, those feelings of devout gratitude which made you fall to the ground and cry, “My Master, take me. Make something of me. Do what You will with me, only let me serve You”? Do you remember that hot haste in which you did rush into the world to tell to another the secret which God had whispered in your ear?

Do you remember now that first month of your consecration to God, when you could not do enough, when you did long to be rid even of necessary worldly employments—that you might devote yourself to God? Methinks I hear those sighs of yours now—“O that I were a doorkeeper in the house of my God! O that I could serve my Master with all my might and with all my strength!” Ah, Brethren, and if you need argument now, what does it mean but that you have lost your first love and that you have fallen from the height of your consecration?  
It seems to be believed by some men who pretend to deep experience, that the love of Christians necessarily cools after conversion. I am sure it ought not to do so. And if it does, it is a fact which is disgraceful to us. To my mind, it is palpable that if we loved our Master much when we first knew Him, we ought to love Him with a tenfold degree of fervent attachment after we have known Him more. Certain I am, if we have seen Christ, the very Christ, and have verily seen Him, we shall be more deeply in love with Him every day. Whereas at first we thought Him lovely, we shall come to know Him so.  
And whereas once we thought anything we could do would be too little, we shall come to think that everything we could do would not be enough. I question that man’s love altogether who has to say of it, that it grew cold after a little season. What? Is the work of God’s Spirit but a sort of spasmodic twitching? Is this all the Spirit does, to lay the lash upon the back of the ass and make it go its jaded journey for an instant with a little more quickened pace? Surely not! God does not thus work. It were an inferior work to any which is exhibited in nature if this were all He did.  
And shall grace be second to the deeds of nature? Does God send the planets on in their orbits and do they continue to roll and after He has made a creature serve Him, will He stop? Does He light the sun and does it blaze forever and will He kindle our zeal and shall it soon be quenched? Is God’s grace as the smoke from the chimney, as the morning cloud and as the early dew that passes away? God forbid that we should harbor the idea! No, Brethren—personal service, personal continued service, too, is but the reasonable effect of that grace which God gave us at the first and which He continues to give us every hour and will give us till we mount to eternal glory.  
III. And now let me advance to my third point—PERSONAL SERVICE— ITS EXCELLENCE,  
This excellence is so manifold, that had I some three hours to preach in, I might continue to go through the list and not exhaust it. Among the first of its charms, personal service is the main argument of the Christian religion against the skeptic. The skeptic says the religion of Christ is maintained by men who make a gain of godliness. “Your living is dependent upon your advocating the canes,” says the infidel. Even to our missionaries this is often said. And though an unworthy suspicion and utterly untrue of men who sacrifice much even when they gain most— uttered to men who in any other service might soon grow rich—in their Masters service seldom, if ever—yet nevertheless, the taunt being ever so unworthy, it has great power over unthinking minds.  
Let the Church, however, work unanimously. Let every private man have his mission, let every man and woman build nearest to their own house and from that day skepticism begins to lose, at least, one of its argument. And with it, it loses one of its most formidable elements—one of its deadliest weapons with which it has attacked the Church. “See there, see there,” says the infidel, “there is an honest man, though he is an honest fool, he does at least believe what he says, for he does it not by word, but personally, he does it not by another, but by himself. Not because he is paid for it, but because he loves it.” Oh, Sirs, it were greatly to the confusion of infidelity, if not to utter destruction, if the whole Church could once see in its proper light and carry out in its full measure, the grand doctrine of personal service.  
But further, I am persuaded that while it would be a grand argument against skeptics, it would be one of the greatest means of deciding that class of waverers, who, although they are not skeptical, are negligent of the things of the kingdom. There is no way to make another man earnest like being earnest one’s self. If I see others who neglect the great salvation and if I neglect it, too, I patronize and aid and abet them in their neglect. But if that man sees me earnest about his salvation, he begins at once to put to himself the question, “Why is this? Here am I asleep and going down into Hell and this man who is no relation of mine and who has no personal interest in me, is grieved, pained and vexed because I am going wrong and he cannot rest and be quiet because he fears I am in danger of the wrath to come.”  
Oh, my Brethren, there would be more souls, I do believe, moved to earnestness by earnestness, than by anything else. The closest logic, the most mighty rhetoric never convinced a soul so well as that mightiest of logic and of rhetoric—the earnestness of a true Christian. Let men who are now slothful see us in earnest and they will begin to follow in our wake. God will bless our example to them—and through us He will save them. But further, the excellency of personal service, it strikes me, is not confined to the good we do, but should be argued from the good we get.  
We have in our Churches, men and women who are always looking for an opportunity for quarreling. If there is a member who has made the slightest slip, they report it to the public, they tell it in Gath and publish it in the streets of Askelon. There is nothing that is right. If you do a thing today, it is wrong. If you were to alter it tomorrow, it would be just as wrong. They are never consistent in anything but in their inconsistent grumbling. The mightiest cure for the Church is to set them to work.  
Armies are troublesome things, even emperors find they must allow these hungry things to blunt their appetite with war. The Church itself can never be much blessed while it has division in its own ranks. Its very activity will cause disorder. The very earnestness in the Christian will cause confusion, unless you lead forth that earnestness to its proper field of development. I have always found that where there is a quarrelsome Church, it is sure to be an idle Church. But where men are always “at it,” they have very little time to find fault with one another. When we fuse iron, the two pieces will soon weld—bring two cold pieces together and the stoutest arm and the heaviest hammer can never weld them.  
Let our Churches be united and they will be earnest. Let them be cold and they will be dashed to a thousand shivers. And moreover, we have a large class of poor creatures, who, while not discontent with others, are discontent with themselves. They don’t fight with other people, but they seem to be incessantly quarreling with a personal jealousy of their own selves. They are not what they like to be and they are not what they wish to be and they don’t feel as they should feel and they don’t think as they would like to think. They are always plunging their finger into their own eyes, because they cannot see so well as they would wish. They are always ripping up the wounds they have, because those wounds smart, making themselves miserable in order that they may be happy. And at last, crying themselves into an inconsolable state of misery, they acquire a habit of mourning, until that mourning seems to be the only bliss they know.  
To use a homely illustration and one which will be remembered, if another might not, the swiftest way for these cold souls to warm themselves is by setting them at once to work. When we were boys, we have sometimes gathered round our father’s fire in the winter time and almost sat upon it, yet we could not get warm. We rubbed our fingers—but they still were blue—at length our father wisely turned us out of doors and bade us work and after some healthy pastime we soon came in with limbs no longer benumbed. The blood was circulated and what fire could not do, exercise soon accomplished.  
Ministers of Christ, if your people cry to you, “Comfort us! Comfort us!—comfort them and make the fire a good one. At the same time remember that all the fire you can ever kindle will not warm them so long as they are idle. If they are idle they cannot be warm. God will not have His people eat the fat and drink the sweet, unless they are prepared to carry their burden and give a portion to others as well as seek meat for themselves. The benefit of personal service, then, is not confined to others, but will come to be enjoyed even by those who engage in it.  
An example or two here may tend to enforce the lesson I am anxious to inculcate. If you wish to prove the truth of this, you can begin to make a tolerable experiment in the course of the next half-hour. Do you want to feel grateful? Do not go home and get the hymnal down. Just go down this street here and take the first turning to the left or the right, whichever you please. Go up the first pair of stairs you come to. You see a little room— perhaps the husband has come home by now—come home weary and there is a swarm of children, all dirty and all live and sleep in—perhaps, that one room.  
Well, if you will only take a view of that with your own eyes and then go home to your own house, you will begin to feel grateful. Or rise up tomorrow morning and go to another house and see a poor creature stretched on the bed of languishing, dependent on the parish allowance and worse than that, dying without hope, knowing nothing of God or of the way of salvation. And if that does not make you grateful when you think of your own interest in the precious blood of Jesus, I know nothing that will.  
Again—you want to be zealous and earnest? Next Sabbath morning walk down the New Cut and if the open depravity does not make you earnest, your blood is fish’s blood and you have not the warmth of man’s blood in you. Just see how the street is thronged all day with those who buy and sell and get gain, while you are meeting in the House of God for prayer and praise.

If that should not satisfy you and you want to feel peculiarly zealous, take your walk abroad and not only look on but begin to act. Take your stand amidst the crowd near the Victoria Theatre and try to preach and if you do not feel desirous when you hear their clamors and see their anxious eyes, as if they longed to hear you with eyes as well as ears—if that does not make you zealous, I know of nothing that will make you so. Take a handful of tracts in your hand and a handful of coppers in your pocket—two good things together and give some of each to the poor people and they will remember you.  
And after you have gone to those—the poorest and the most depraved— if you do not go home with a feeling of gratitude mingled with one of earnest zeal for the salvation of souls, I do not know what remedy I can prescribe. I wish some of you fine ladies and gentlemen would walk down some of our courts and alleys—no—I would wish you to have a special treat that you might always remember. I would like you to sleep one night at a lodging house. I should like you to eat one meal with the poor man. I should like you to sit in the midst of one drunken brawl. I should wish you to see one poor wife, her face all bleeding, where a brutal and degrading husband had been striking her.  
I should like you to spend one Sabbath in the midst of sin and debauchery. I should like you to see one scene of vice and then hurry away once and for all. Methinks, if I took you there not only to see, but to act and cooperate in some holy deed of service—took you there that you might thrust your hand into the kennel and bring up some lost jewel—that you might thrust your finger into the very fire, that you might pluck some bread from the burning—I think that usefulness would not be all on the part of others, but to a great degree react upon your own heart. You would go home and say, “I could not have believed it. I could not have imagined that the necessities of this city were so great. That the need of praying and preaching and generous liberality, could have been one-tenth so huge.”  
I am sure if you are Christians, from that time forward, you would be more indefatigable in your industry and more unlimited in your gifts than before. I must not tarry longer—time reproves me—though if it is that any of you shall carry out in practice, what I have suggested, the time employed in persuading you will have been well spent.  
IV. I want now, for a minute or two, to come to that Society, for which I stand here to plead tonight and observe ITS PECULIAR ADAPTATION TO PERSONAL SERVICE.  
We love the Missionary Society, both for home and abroad, though it does in measure help us to serve God by proxy. I love the Bible Society, because that enables me to serve God personally. For the same reason, I must ever love the Religious Tract Society, because that enables me, no, compels me, if I would do anything, to do it myself.  
I think I need only just mention one or two particulars. The peculiar form of usefulness which the Religious Tract Society lays hold upon is admirably adapted to those persons who have but little power and little ability, but nevertheless wish to do something for Christ. They have not the tongue of the eloquent, but they may have the hand of the diligent. They cannot stand and preach, but they can stand and distribute here and there these silent preachers. They do not feel that they could subscribe their guinea, but they may buy their thousand tracts and these they can distribute broadcast.  
How many a little one in Zion has spent his life in doing this good, when he could not perhaps have found any other good within his reach? This however, is but the beginning—the smallest part of the matter. And when men begin with little efforts for Christ, such as the giving away of a tract, they become stronger to do something else afterwards. I speak personally tonight—and excuse the allusion. I remember the first service which my youthful heart rendered to Christ was the doing up of tracts in envelopes, that might send them, with the hope that by choosing pertinent tracts, applicable to persons I knew and then sealing them up, that God would bless them.  
And I well remember telling them and distributing them in a town in England where tracts had never been distributed before and going from house to house and telling in humble language, the things of the kingdom of God. I might have done nothing, if I had not been encouraged by finding myself able to do something. I sought to do something more, and then from that, something more and now have I got beyond. And so I do not doubt that many of the servants of God have been led on to do something higher and nobler because the first step was for good.  
I look upon the giving away of a religious tract as only the first step for action not to be compared with many another deed done for Christ. But were it not for the first step we might never reach to the second. But that first attained, we are encouraged to take another and so at last, God helping us, we may be made extensively useful. Besides, there is this to be said for the Society, that it does not make a man perform an act which looks like service but which is not. There is a real service of Christ in the distribution of the Gospel in its printed form, a service the result of which Heaven alone shall disclose and the Judgment Day alone discover.  
How many thousands have been carried to Heaven instrumentally upon the wings of these tracts, none can tell. I might say, if it were right to quote such a Scripture, “The leaves were for the healing of the nations”— verily they are so. Scattered where the whole tree could scarcely be carried, the very leaves have had a medicinal and a healing virtue in them and the real Word of Truth, the simple statement of a Savior crucified and of a sinner who shall be saved by simply trusting in the Savior, has been greatly blessed and many a thousand souls have been led into the kingdom of Heaven by this simple means.  
And now what shall I say to bind up what has been already said into a compact form! Let each one of us, if we have done nothing for Christ, begin to do something now. The distribution of tracts is the first thing. Let us do that and attempt something else by-and-by.  
We are, on the other hand, diligently engaged already in some higher service for Christ, let us not despise those steps which helped us up, but let us now assist others with these steps that they, too, may rise from the grade of service which is theirs to a higher and a greater one. Let us, in fact, encourage this Society at all times with our contributions and with our prayers. I would remind you that during this year the Tract Society has sent abroad some forty-two million tracts—some four and a half millions more than last year. These have been sent throughout the whole earth. Extensive as man, I may say, has been the action of this society— not confined to any sect or denomination, or any class or clime. It has labored for all and all Christians have labored with it and God has given it a large measure of success.  
I think I may leave it in your hands tonight. But permit me this one word before I bid you farewell. Many of you I shall never see again and I remember that my own sermon tells me that I have personal service to perform for Christ. It is not enough for me to urge you to do it, I must do it, too. My Hearers, imagine not that any service you can do for Christ will save your souls if you are unrenewed. If your faith is not fixed in Jesus your best works will be but splendid sins. All the performance of duties will not affect your salvation. Cease from your own righteousness, cease from all deeds of working out life and “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Trust Jesus and you are saved, trust self and you are lost.  
Just as you are, cast yourselves on Christ. I remember Dr. Hawker concluding an admirable discourse with these brief words—The words were addressed to Rebecca of old—“Will you go with this man?” Let me conclude with the like words—Souls, will you go with Christ? Will you go to Christ? “I would go with Him,” says one, “but would He have me?” Did He ever reject one that came to Him? “I would go with Christ,” says another, “but I am naked.” He will clothe you. “I would go to Him,” says a third, “but I am filthy.” He can cleanse you—no, His own blood shall wash you and His own veins will supply the purifying stream.  
“I would go with Him,” says another, “but I am diseased and leprous and cannot walk with Him.” Ah, but He is a great Physician and He can heal you. Come as you are to Christ. Many say, “But I cannot come.” I remember praying in the North of Ireland, in the revival, which just hits the mark. The young converts will say to one another, when one says, “I cannot come,” “Brother, come if you can and if you can’t come, come as you can.” Will you not come, when by coming to Christ you may save your soul? We do not know what faith is when we say to ourselves, “It is something so mysterious I cannot reach it.”  
Faith is trusting Christ. It is the end of mystery and the beginning of simplicity. The giving up of all those idle feelings and believing that anything else can save the soul and the reception of that one master thought, that Christ Jesus is exalted on high to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins. Never soul perished trusting Jesus, never heart was blasted with perdition that had confidently rested itself upon the Cross.  
There is your hope, poor shipwrecked mariner, yonder constellation of the Cross with those five stars, the wounds of Jesus. Look there and live. One glance and you are saved. Those soul-quickening words, “Believe and live,” comprehend the whole Gospel of God. May the Divine Spirit lead you now out of self unto Christ. O Lord! Command your blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1216 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TO SOULS IN AGONY  
NO. 1216

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul...You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears,  
and my feet from falling.”  
Psalm 116:3, 4, 8.**

THE great trouble which is here described very probably happened to David long after he had been a Believer. He had been living the life of faith, perhaps, for years, in a calm, happy and quiet manner. But by-andby he met with outward tribulation and not a little of inward conflict. At some time or other it generally happens to a Believer, between the setting out at the wicket gate and the crossing of the last river, that he endures a great fight of afflictions. My observation leads me to notice that those who begin with rough times frequently have a smooth path afterwards, while others, whose first experience was very sunny and peaceful, meet with fierce conflicts farther on.

Those who have enjoyed a long, calm and comparatively easy life, may meet their stormiest hours at the close of their days, for some of the best of God’s children, to use an old Puritan’s expression, “are put to bed in the dark.” Their sun sets in clouds, but doubtless it rises again in the full splendor of the eternal morning! Somewhere or other, Brothers and Sisters, you will learn to acknowledge that—

*“The path of sorrow, and that path, alone,*

*Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*The saints above who sing the new song are, at least many of them, described by the words, “These are they which came out of great tribulation.” That is the general way to Heaven and perhaps few travelers reach Paradise by any other road. Let Believers, therefore, not count upon immunity from trouble, but let them reckon upon sufficient Grace for it. Let them believe that God’s choicest letters of love are sent to us in blackedged envelopes. We are frightened at the envelope, but inside, if we know how to break the seal, we shall find riches for our souls.

Great trials are the clouds out of which God gives great mercies. Very frequently, when the Lord has an extraordinary mercy to send to us, He employs His rough and grizzled horses to drag it to the door. The smooth rivers of ease are usually navigated by little vessels filled with common commodities, but a huge galleon loaded with treasure traverses the deep seas. Let the children of God learn from this passage in David’s experience that their best resort in trouble is prayer. When the sorrows of death compass you, pray! When the pains of Hell get hold upon you, pray!

When you find trouble and sorrow, pray! Everything else which prudence and wisdom suggest is to be done in a time of difficulty, but none of these things are to be relied upon by themselves.

“Salvation is of the Lord,” whether it is salvation from troubles or from sins. You do right to provide the horse for the day of battle, but still, safety is of the Lord. Use the means, but never supplant faith by the use of means. When you have done all, trust in God as though you had done nothing, for, “Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watches but in vain.” In all things pray! And be well assured that if at this moment you are in the same plight as David was, prayer will bring you out of it. Prayer is the catholicon, the universal cure! It subdues every disease. In spiritual conflicts it has a thousand uses. You may say of it, “By this will I break through a troop; by this will I leap over a wall; by this will I put on shield and buckler and by this will I smite the foe.” Prayer can unlock the treasures of God and shut the gates of Hell! Prayer can quench the violence of flames and stop the lions’ mouths. Prayer can overcome Heaven and bend Omnipotence to its will. Only pray, Brothers and Sisters, believingly and in the name of the Well-Beloved, and answers of peace must be given to you.

I intend, this evening, to use the text with another view. I mean to accommodate it, as I think lawfully, and to use it as a description of the condition of an awakened sinner. To sinners under conviction I would address myself, for I know there are such in the congregation. I was glad to hear their cries the other night, and I hope, with that, the Lord means to bless them and bring them into liberty. We shall speak, first, of this poor soul’s condition. Then of his course of action. And then of the deliverance he obtained.

I. First, here is THE WRETCHED CONDITION into which many a poor awakened soul has been brought. But let me, before I proceed further, say, that if any of you are believers in Christ and have not felt all that I speak of, you are not to condemn yourselves because of it. There are many maladies in the world. If I am describing a sickness and the way in which the physician cures it, you must not say, “I am surely wrong, for I never felt that phase of the disease.” That does not matter. No man suffers all maladies. If you are resting only upon Jesus, do not disturb yourself— that which I am about to utter is not meant for your disturbance, but for other people’s comfort.

From our text I remark that many a troubled conscience feels the sorrows of death. That is to say he is the subject of griefs similar to those which beset men on their dying beds. I have passed through this state, myself, and I shall therefore describe it the more feelingly. What are the sorrows of death? One of the sorrows of a sinner’s death is the retrospect. The dying sinner looks back and sees nothing in his life that yields him comfort. He could wish that the day had been darkness in which it was said that a child was born into the world, for he feels that his existence has been a blank and, worse than that, an insult to God and the cause of misery to himself. He cannot see a bright or hopeful spot in his whole history.

So, too, the man truly awakened weeps over a dreadful past and laments because all is evil and the very things he once gloried in are tarnished. He sees that to have been sin, which before he thought to have been righteousness! And he bemoans himself, saying within his heart, “Would God I had never been born.” Many an awakened man has said, as John Bunyan did, that he wished he had been a frog or a toad, or a venomous serpent sooner than have been a man to have lived as he had lived. Are you feeling, dear Friend, or have you ever felt that sorrow of death? Some of us have felt it keenly.

Another sorrow of death is grief over the present. The man lies tossing to and fro upon his deathbed and all his glory and beauty are gone. The bloom of health has departed from him. He is a very different man from what he was in the days of his agility and vigor—and he knows it. So is it with the sinner—he feels the pining sickness of sin consuming him as the moth consumes a garment. His moisture is turned into the drought of summer. His glory is as a faded flower and the excellency of his flesh, in which he boasted and said that he was no worse than others and, perhaps, was even better, is now passed away. The Spirit, when He blows upon man, finding all flesh to be grass, withers it all up—and so He destroys the glory of man’s estate and makes his excellency decay till the man is sick to death of himself.

The dying man also sees all his strength departing. Perhaps he thinks, like Samson, to shake himself as at other times, but he is mistaken. The limbs that bore him to his bed fall under him and the hand with which he labored drops palsied by his side. The very eyelids scarcely can drop to form a curtain from the light, or lift themselves to admit the blessed beams of the sun. The golden bowl is breaking and the silver cord is being snapped. It is just so with an awakened sinner. He feels death in his soul. He used to be able, as he thought, to do anything! His notion was that he could repent and believe, amend and reform and save himself whenever he liked.

But now the cold chill of death has come upon all his powers and he hears Christ, in mercy, saying, “Without Me you can do nothing. No man can come to Me unless the Father, which has sent Me, draw him.” A man experiences a dreadful paralysis in his soul when he is really and thoroughly awakened. The Spirit of God is making sure work of his conversion! He sees his beauty faded and his strength departed and thus the sorrows of death get hold upon him. Another present sorrow of death is the discovery that friends are no longer of any service. The dying man must leave wife and children. They would gladly accompany him, but they cannot.

That dear wife would be willing to dare Death, itself, if she might still continue the companion of the man whom she has loved, but it must not be. The fondest affection cannot help, now. The awakened sinner discovers precisely the same thing with regard to spiritual help. He would have looked to a priest, but he dares not. He would have looked to his minister, but he knows that if he did, he would be disappointed. He finds emptiness written upon every creature so far as his soul’s necessities are concerned. His sore is too terrible for any man to find a plaster, his wound too deep for any human hand to close it up. The sorrows of death in this respect compass him.

Perhaps the worst sorrow about the death of an ungodly man is the prospect. The past is black, but blacker, still, the future. The present is gloomy, but, oh, the darkness, which may be felt, which environs the hereafter! The dying man shudders at the awful future and so does the awakened sinner. He dares not go forward! He is afraid and a dreadful sound is in his ears. I, myself, before I obtained mercy, was afraid lest every tuft of grass I trod on should open beneath my feet and swallow me up. So did sin press upon me, that I should not have been astonished if I had met, in my daily walks, an angel, as Balaam did, with a drawn sword! And if he had said to me, “You are doomed forever for your sin,” I could only have been dumb before him, or confessed the justice of the sentence. Thus does many a sinner feel the sorrows of death compass him. They are all around him—those sorrows of the past, the present and the future.

The description becomes yet more graphic in the next sentence. Awakened sinners sometimes feel what they describe as the pains of Hell. Not that any living man does endure the pains of Hell to the extent which they are suffered in Hell, but still a dreadful foretaste of those pains may be experienced and, sometimes is experienced by an awakened conscience. What are these pains of Hell? First, there is the pain of remorse. Before the soul believes in Christ, it has no repentance, but it suffers remorse—a sorrow for sin because of its penalty! It is a dreadful horror of having lived such a life because it sees that it must be punished for that life, and that God, the infinitely Just, must take vengeance upon its transgressions.

Remorse! Is not its tooth as sharp as that of the undying worm? Is not its burning as the fires of Tophet? When we felt it, we cried, “My soul chooses strangling rather than life!” If God in mercy did not stay the soul with some little wavering hope, even before it comes to faith in Jesus, surely the spirit of man would utterly fail under a remorseful sense of sin! One of the pains of Hell is a sense of condemnation. The lost souls are called the “damned”—in other words, the condemned. Assuredly, before we believed in Jesus, some of us felt that we were condemned. “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

I remember how that curse howled through my soul like the tempest shrieking among the shrouds of a sinking ship. “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them”—I knew that I had not continued in all things required by the Law—and I knew that I was cursed! And then came this other text. It was the Gospel side of the same terrible blast—“He that believes not is condemned already”—condemned already—“because he has not believed on the Son of God.” When two such winds as those two texts meet each other, it is enough to sweep the poor frail tenement of manhood to a ruin like that which overthrew the house in which the sons of Job were met to feast! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it is no little thing—let those who know it assure you—to have felt the pains of Hell!

Perhaps one of the acutest pangs of an awakened conscience is a sense of hopelessness, a terrible despair, unalleviated by any prospect of improvement in the future. We were driven to that, too, some of us. All hope of our being saved was lost. There was, sometimes, a little twinkling ray of light which seemed to say, “Jesus came to seek and to save sinners.” But we could not even see that lone star at all times, for we thought that He did not come to seek and to save such sinners as we were and, moreover, since we had rejected Him before, we feared that His mercy was clean gone, forever! How despairingly was I known to harp upon that thought!

I now wish I had not done so, but I know that some others do it and I would speak to their experience. May God deliver their frail boats from the whirlpools of despair, that awful whirlpool which has sucked down so many! There is another pang of Hell which the awakened feel and that is a crushing sense of misery. Though not in Hell yet—and blessed be God you will not be—yet some of you feel almost as wretched as if you were there, for remorse, intensified by a sense of condemnation and lashed by despair, creates a dreadful storm within your soul, till your heart cries out—

*“At noise of Your dread waterspout  
Deep unto deep does call!  
Your breaking waves go over me,  
Yes, and Your billows all.  
I am cast out from Your sight:  
I seek You, but I cannot find You:  
I cry after You, but You hear me not.”*

Then is the soul smitten, indeed. Read the books of Job and Jeremiah and you will see what broken hearts can suffer. Those books were not written for people in olden times only, but they declare the present experience of many a seeker after Christ—and thus they oftentimes render comfort to poor souls when no other portion of God’s Word seems to have a single syllable to speak to them.

Thus I have taken two great sentences of the text—“The sorrows of death compassed me” and, “The pains of Hell got hold upon me.” But the case was worse than this, for the poor soul felt no alleviation and knew of no escape. These things were, by themselves, unsoftened. They were left in all their terror—the gall was unmixed, the vinegar undiluted. Notice the language. “The sorrows of death compassed me.” It is a very strong word.

When hunters seek their prey, they form a circle around the poor animal that is to be destroyed. The poor panting creature looks to the right, but a man with a spear is there. He looks to the left and there are the dogs. Before and behind him are more spearmen, more hounds, more hunters— there is no way of escape.

So does an awakened soul discern no rescue, no loophole by which it may be delivered. The text says, “The pangs of Hell got hold upon me.” “Got hold.” As if the jaws of the lion had really gripped the lamb, or the paws of the bear were hugging the poor defenseless sheep. “Got hold upon me.” As though God’s terrible sergeant from the Court of Justice had laid his hand upon his shoulder and said, “I arrest you in the name of God to lie in Hell’s prison and perish forever.” Many a soul has felt that and felt, also, that it could not get away from the terrible grip.

Some who know nothing of contrition and heartbreak enquire, “Why don’t they get out of such bondage?” Ah, but if you were in that condition, such a question would grieve, if not exasperate you! I have known persons put a great many questions to troubled hearts which they, themselves, could not answer if they were in their state. Do you ask a man who has had both his legs broken, and lies across the rails of the railway—why do you not walk home? Why does he not walk home? Say, rather—why do you ask such a foolish question? When a poor soul is broken to pieces and despairing, tell him what Christ did for him and say very little about what he ought to do! You will never comfort the desponding man by telling him his duty. Speak, rather, of Jesus’ love! Poor souls, they are so disturbed and tossed about that they can do nothing! Tell them what Jesus has done! That is the way to bring light to their souls.

Once more, the Psalmist felt no comfort from any exertion that he made. That takes in the last sentence of the text’s description. “I found trouble and sorrow,” so that he looked for something, but the only result of his search was that he found trouble and sorrow. Do you remember, beloved Believer, in the days when you were under bondage on account of sin— how you bound yourself apprentice to Moses to work out your own salvation by your own goodness? What did you get? Surely you found trouble in the work and sorrow as its wages! You were like a horse at a mill—the whip was used very freely upon you, but it brought you nothing except a sense of failure—a conviction that all you had done was rather a provocation of God by setting up an antichrist of your own righteousness. There was no help towards an atonement for your sin.

You found trouble and sorrow. Perhaps you went to Mr. Legality and he, and his son, Mr. Morality, did what they could for you. But if you were really awakened, all that you got from them was trouble and sorrow. That was the whole result of it. It is just possible that you went over the road to the ceremonial shop—attended one of the ritualistic jogs-houses and went through the performances there. And then you were told that a priest could absolve you and an outward form and ceremony could quiet your mind. Ah, if you were a living soul you found only trouble and sorrow in all that foolery! And now you have come to look upon it with intense contempt—as the most intolerable imposture of any age since man began to seek out many inventions!

Vain is it to harp to a hungry belly, or dance to a broken limb! And equally a mockery are all the posturing and lies of Romanism to those whose hearts bleed for sin—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

If they look elsewhere, they will find trouble and sorrow, and nothing more. Assuredly this a pretty pass to be brought to. What is to be done? What is to be done? Sinner, there is nothing to be done! At least, nothing which you can do. You are shut up to be saved by Jesus, or to be lost! I liked the remark of a good Brother from this platform the other day, when he said that Gospel ministers were fishers and that we were to fish with nets. It was all a mistake that we were to catch people with bait—that was angling—and there was nothing about angling in Christ’s commission. We are to fish with nets.

Now, what is a net for? The net is to shut the fish up. It goes under them, around them, everywhere—and shuts them up so that they cannot get out. That is exactly what God does with poor sinners whom He means to save! He shuts them right up. He puts the net round them and they cannot get out. Only when the net quite encloses his fish can the Gospel fisherman get them out of the sea of sin and lift them into the boat where Jesus sits! We must get the net right round them—shut them up by the Law that they may be brought to Christ. Every avenue of escape is closed against you forever, Sinner, except one—and that is Christ, who says, “I am the door.” There is no other door, neither upwards nor downwards, to the right nor to the left, before nor behind! You are ruined and destroyed, O Sinner, and you must perish if left to yourself! There is none in earth, or Heaven, that can help you, save One! And O, if the Lord will lead you to look to Him, what a blessed thing it will be!

II. That brings us to the second part of our discourse, which is to speak about the awakened sinner’s COURSE OF ACTION. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” What did he do? First, he called—called upon God’s name, invoked Him, spoke to Him, lifted up his heart and lifted up his voice—called as a man might do who is lost in a fog and calls to a neighbor, hoping to hear a voice that will guide him. Or as one who is far away in the bush of Australia and gives a call in the hope that some human voice may respond to it.

This call is often described as a cry—a natural, simple, authentic, unpleasant, but most effectual style of expressing our distress. Oh, Sinner, if God has really been at work with you and you are where I have been describing, you will call to God now! Your heart will cry to God at once! Tears will speak for you, sighs will speak for you. Your heart, in its silence, will speak unto God and call upon His name! Notice he says, “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” There will be no more calling upon

ministers, or calling upon priests, or calling upon yourself, but, “then called I upon the name of the Lord.”

The sinner had forgotten the Lord till then, and now the Lord came to his remembrance. “When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare?” Thus his father came to the prodigal’s remembrance. When we get among the swine and would gladly fill our bellies with their husks, but cannot, then we begin to pray to God whom we have forgotten. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” Now, what better could he do, for who could help him if the sorrows of death compassed him? Who but He who overthrew death and vanquished the grave? Who can help us, when the pains of Hell get hold upon us, but He who has passed through the pains that were due us for the death penalty—and who has cast both Death and Hell into the Lake of Fire?

Who can help the hopeless one so well as the Conqueror of Death and Hell? Who can sympathize like the Lord? The Lord Jesus, Himself, has known the sorrows of Death and, therefore, He is touched with compassion for the sons of men. Is He not the Son of Man, Himself, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin? Poor Sinner, I tried to shut you up, but now I set before you an open door! Call upon the name of Him who knows your condition, is able to meet it and to deliver you! When did he call? That is the important point in this text. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” Then.

Was that the first time in his life? Perhaps it was. Begin at once, O Sinner! Notice, he says, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” When his condition was at its very worst, then he called upon God. Why did he not stop till he became better? He knew that delays are dangerous. “Then called I.” Had he tarried till he was better, he would never have called at all, but he called then and, though it was the first time, he was not ashamed to break the ice, or if he was ashamed, he did it anyway and succeeded! Suppose that you never, till this night, did ever look to your heavenly Father, and now it is the worst state of life with you that you were ever in. What then?

Even now is the time for prayer! Now you need your God and now you may have your God! “Then called I.” You see he did not call upon God till God sent Death and Hell after him. He was a wandering sheep and so set on going astray that he would not come back till the two fiercest dogs that the Great Shepherd keeps had come after him! And then he came back with a passion! I half wish that God would send Death and Hell after some of you who never will come—that they might worry you and tear you—and make you return to the Great Shepherd. “Then called I.” That is to say, when I could call on no one else. No sinner ever calls upon God till he finds that he has nowhere else to go!

And yet the Lord receives these good-for-nothings! Although we only come because we have nowhere else to go, yet He will receive us! Into the port of Sovereign Grace no vessel ever runs except through stress of weather. When the sea is rough and the wind furious. When the tempest is on and the ship must go down or else—then Lord Will-Be-Will, who has held the helm before and said, “I will never enter that harbor”—is suddenly subdued and cries, “Oh for a gust of heavenly wind to blow us between the two red lights, right into the safe waters where we may ride at peace.” I pray God to send a tempest after all of you Jonahs, that you may be brought to the right place, after all, and landed safely on the shore of Sovereign Mercy. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.”

And now for his prayer. Here it is—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” A very natural prayer, was it not? He just said what he meant, and meant what he said, and that is the way to pray! It is a very short prayer. Many a prayer is too long by at least 20 lines. It is smothered under a bed full of words. There are times when a Christian can pray from hour to hour—but it is a great mistake when Brethren measure their supplications by the clock. The great matter is not how long you pray, but how earnestly you pray. Consider the life of the prayer rather than the length of the prayer. If your prayer reaches to Heaven it is long enough! What longer can it need to be? If it does not reach the Lord, though it occupied you for a week, it would not be long enough to be of use.

It was a humble prayer—“O Lord, I beseech You.” It is the language of one who is bowed in the dust. It was an intense prayer—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” But I want you most of all to notice that it was a Scriptural prayer. There are three great little prayers in Scripture— “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” And, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” These are all contained in the Lord’s Prayer. “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” is, “Deliver us from evil.” “God be merciful to me a sinner”—what is that, but, “Forgive us our trespasses”? And what is the prayer, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom,” but that grand petition, “Your kingdom come”?

How wonderfully comprehensive is that prayer which our Lord Jesus has given us for a model! All prayers may be condensed into it, or distilled from it. Let no person here say, “I am in the distress which you have described, but I cannot pray.” Why not? “I have no words.” You need no words—wordless prayers are frequently the best. “But I can only groan.” Groan away, Brother! “But I feel as if I could only sigh.” Sigh, then! “My heart aches, but I do not know how to express myself.” Do not express yourself—let your heart ache on—only let it ache up to God! Turn all your desires towards Him and let this be the intense pleading of your spirit—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.”

You know we have a law that people must not beg in the streets. There is a man I know on a certain road who does not beg and yet begs. The police would not let him beg and, therefore, he never begs at all—not he! It

would be a slander to say of him that he begs! But he wears a pair of shoes through which you can see his toes and the side of his heel. You can spy his knees through his trousers. His cheeks are all sunken and his whole appearance is that of a consumptive man who must soon die. He has been consuming now for many years and dying daily most comfortably! I believe that if I were to say to him, “Are you a beggar?” he would reply, “Beggar? No, Sir, certainly not! I never beg.”

Yet he is one of the most successful of beggars! His looks beg! His rags beg! His flesh begs! His weariness begs! His general air of sickness begs! Everything about him begs! He begs all over! That is the way to PRAY! Pour out your heart before the Lord, with or without words, as you find most easy—but let your inmost heart be really full of desire! Be resolved about obtaining the blessing! Do as one did the other night, who said within himself, “I am a lost soul, but I will never rise from the side of this bed till I find the Savior. I am determined to get forgiveness or die on my knees.” He cried and groaned and won the day!

We should not have liked to have heard his pitiful cries, for there was no beauty or elegance in his language, and no music in his groans—but the Lord heard him and saved his soul! “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” is a prayer most congruous to the situation and in every way suitable to it! Oh, that all prayers were as suitable as this! This, then, is the wisdom of every poor distressed soul in its time of trouble. It must, by a simple faith in Jesus, breathe out its desire at the Cross and say, “Jesus, Savior, save me now, and deliver my soul.”

III. Our third point is DELIVERANCE and for this I refer you to the 8th verse. This poor, pleading, doubting, trembling petitioner received what he asked for. He said, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” and before long he sang, “You have delivered my soul.” As the echo answers to the voice, so the Lord replied to his request. If you are asking for salvation with all your heart—with your eye on Christ’s Cross—you shall have it! If you cast yourself before Jesus and say to Him, “If I perish, I will perish at Your pierced feet,” you shall not perish! If you sincerely cry for forgiveness, as the publican did, you shall go down to your house justified!

Note, next, that while he had what he asked for, it came from Him of whom he asked it—“You have delivered my soul from death.” Vile delight to ascribe salvation wholly to our Triune God! Some Brethren are a little cloudy in their talk about man’s salvation. But when you get to the inner experience of all true Believers, they will always tell you that they did not save themselves and they agree that it was not by their own will or merit that they were saved, but by the Sovereign Grace of God, alone. The unrighteous may gain deliverance from themselves, or their fellow men, but those whom the Holy Spirit convicts of sin must be delivered by the Lord Himself—nothing short of a Divine salvation will do for them. “You have delivered my soul from death.” Mine was a case in which none could help me but Yourself, my God. My sorrows demanded Omnipotent cordials— only the blood of Jesus and the balm of the Holy Spirit could comfort me!

Note, again, that this blessing came consciously to him. “You have delivered my soul from death.” He does not say, “I

 hope You have” but, “You have.” “I know it, I am sure of it, I rejoice in it.” And it is not, “I have shared the blessing in common with a great many and I hope that I have an interest in it.” No, but, “You have delivered my soul from death. If there is not another saved man in the world, I am one.” The faith which looks, alone, to Jesus is an appropriating Grace and enables the soul to say, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” As a dear young friend said to me last Monday night, when I was speaking to her about her soul, “I came to see, Sir, that Christ loved me as much as though there was not another man or woman in the world, and laid His life down in my place, as much as if there was not another sinner that needed His blood to be shed. When I got Christ all to myself then I rejoiced in Him and now,” she said, “I want everybody else to have Him.”

It is just so. We must get Him, ourselves, with a holy greediness that fences Him about all for ourselves, and then we shall cultivate a largehearted love for souls and long that every other person may know the same precious Christ. So the Psalmist, you see, got what he asked for—it came from Him of whom he asked it—and it came consciously to him. But I want you to notice one other thing. He gained a great deal more than he asked for. He prayed, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul,” and God delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. He asked for one thing, and he obtained it—and two other things besides—for it is our heavenly Father’s way to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think. Blessed be His name!

He gained deliverance from death, for souls can die though they cannot cease to exist. They die when separated from God, as Adam’s soul died in the day when he ate of the forbidden fruit—and as all souls are dead until by union to God they are quickened into spiritual life. Through the Grace of God, David was delivered from the spiritual death which reigns within and the eternal death to which it leads. His eyes were also cleared from tears. Who is not free from sorrow when he is free from the fear of the death penalty? Forgiveness has joy at its heel wherever it comes! And then, having gained salvation and joy, the Lord gave him stability. Those feet that were so apt to slide were set fast and the fear of future apostasy was removed by the gracious securities which God gave to him that He would never leave him. Thus he had a blessing for his soul, his eyes and his feet—salvation, joy and stability!

The last word to be said is this— these same blessings can be had by others. If I address any who are now passing through the terrible experience of David, or anything like it—or if I address any who are not passing through any such experience, but, nevertheless, desire life everlasting—I would say to them, “Remember, the reason David was heard did not lie in his prayer, or in himself, but it in God!” Read the verse which follows my

first text—the 5th verse: “Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yes, our God is merciful.” That is why the Lord heard David’s prayer—because He is gracious and He loves to show Divine Grace to sinners!

It was also because He is righteous and therefore keeps His promises. He has made a promise that He will hear prayer and He has said, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” And, therefore, in mercy and righteousness He will hear us. Remember, too, that if your distresses are like David’s, you may use the same prayer, because you have the same promises. God’s promises are not used up and spent so that they will not work for you. If a good meal is provided for half-adozen people and they eat it all up, and six more come afterwards, why, they must go without! But with God’s promises it is not so! They are fed upon by myriads and yet they remain the same! Ten thousand souls have fed upon a precious Christ and received what they needed from Him, and yet 10,000 more may come—

*“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more.”*

Let us remember, then, that we have the same promises and the same God. Let the same prayer be offered by each unconverted one here—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” God’s answer to that is, “Believe on My Son, Jesus Christ. Trust Him wholly and your soul is delivered.”—

*“All your sins were laid upon Him,  
Jesus bore them on the tree.  
God who knew them laid them on Him,  
And believing, you are free!”*

Trust Him and you are delivered, for thus says the Lord, “I will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.” Turn your eyes to what Jesus Christ has done! Rest in His finished Sacrifice and go your way rejoicing! May God the Eternal Spirit lead each of you poor sinners to that! And I would entreat you, when He does so, to come and let us know it.

Do as the Psalmist tells you by his example. Say, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all His people.” Do not hide His love! Confess it to His Glory, for the comfort of His people, for the encouragement of His minister and for the strengthening of His Church! The Lord be with you, Brothers and Sisters, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 116.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 138. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2758 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“RETURN UNTO YOUR REST”  
NO. 2758

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 22, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1879.

**“Return to your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Psalm 116:7.**

You who have not be1ieved in our Lord Jesus Christ have no rest to which you can return, for you have never found any. May God grant to you the Grace to come to Christ that you may find rest unto your souls! But we who believe in Him do enter into rest. We are sometimes described as journeying through the wilderness towards Canaan, and the type is quite allowable, but still, it must not be pressed too far, for, in another sense, we have already entered into our rest. We have entered the Canaan which our Joshua has given to us. Moses, by the Law of God, could not lead us into this promised land, but Jesus has brought us into it and we now have our portion and our inheritance in the Covenant blessings which God has provided for His people in Christ Jesus His Son. God’s people, when they are as they ought to be, are in a state of rest even now. I do not mean that they will have rest so far as this world is concerned, for this earth is not our rest, it is polluted. But I do mean that as the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” I mean that, as he also says, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And that peace includes “rest, sweet rest”—especially that “peace of God, which passes all understanding,” which the Apostle declares, “shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

If I am, at this time, addressing any who have, for a while, lost the enjoyment of this blessed rest, my message to them is, “Return to your rest.” I hope that they will be able to take the Psalmist’s words to themselves and to say with him, “Return to your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”

I. The first thing for us to remember is that THE BELIEVER HAS HIS REST. The Psalmist says, “Return to your rest, O my soul,”  
There is a position, or an experience in which the Believer’s heart is perfectly at rest. While trying to think how I should describe it, nothing seemed to strike me as a more full and accurate description of the Believer’s rest than the apostolic benediction with which we are accustomed to dismiss our assemblies. He has true rest of heart who abides in the spirit of these words—“The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.”  
The first rest of the heart comes to us through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We generally speak of Him as the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, but in the benediction He is put first because, to our experience, He is first. No man comes unto God the Father except by God the Son. So, to us, Christ is first because that is the way His Grace works in us. And, Beloved, when you know how to come to Christ for Grace—no, when you have come to Him and have received from Him the Grace to cover all your sin—the Grace to justify you in the sight of God— the Grace of adoption, by which you become a son of God in Him who is the Father’s only-begotten and well-beloved Son—when you have received the Grace of union with Christ so that you know yourselves to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones—when you know that all His Grace is yours and that He, Himself, is yours, then it is that you get rest unto your souls!  
Sin can no longer disturb you, for it is drowned in the Red Sea of His atoning Sacrifice. Your necessities cannot distress you, for they are all supplied by God “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Nothing need perplex, or afflict, or worry you any more. All the troubles of thought are ended as you believe what your Lord tells you. All the cravings of your heart are satisfied as you take Him to be the Beloved of your soul. All the struggles of your conscience are ended as Christ brings to you peace and rest forever concerning all your sin. In fact, as soon as you come to Him, He gives you, through His abundant Grace, rest about everything!  
This, then, is the first rest of the Believer which comes to Him through the Grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is a further rest for us who believe and a very sweet one. It is in the love of God. It comes to us when we hear such a gentle whisper as this, “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Or this, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you: therefore will I give men for you and people for your life.” Or this, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire: you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” Oh, what blessed rest springs out of electing love and adopting love! What sweet rest we obtain from the assurance that God the Father and God the Son both love us, even as our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.” Thus is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.  
This glorious fact gives us rest with regard to our position here. We cannot be troubled by affliction because it is sent to us in love. We cannot be worried about the future for all its concerns are in the hands of the God of Love. We no longer harbor doubt and mistrust, for we know that “God is love.” O dear Friends, when you once come to really know the love of God, it will give you wondrous rest! You will feel that He never smote a child of His except in love, that He never even frowned at one of His children except in love—and that He never was angry with one of His children except in love! And love, perhaps, never rises to a greater climax of affection than when it is forced to show its anger and so uses the rod more to its own pain than to the suffering of those who feel it. Beloved, I trust that each one of you who believes in Jesus, knows what that rest of heart is which enables you to say, “My God, my Father, You can do nothing to me but what Infinite Love dictates, for I know that You love me even as You love Your first-born and only-begotten Son.”  
The third rest of the Believer is in the communion of the Holy Spirit. O Beloved, this is the truest rest of the soul—so far as your actual experience is concerned—when the Holy Spirit comes and takes complete possession of you, so that your will does not any longer struggle against the will of God, but sweetly yields to its control—your desires no longer wander, but stay at home in full content and you give yourself up entirely to the Divine indwelling, so that Christ dwells in you and you abide in Him by the power of His gracious Spirit. Then that same blessed Spirit brings to your mind the deep things of God which are full of rich comfort for the soul, and the precious things of the everlasting hills of the Covenant of Grace which abound in all the blessings that you can possibly need between here and Heaven, for it is the Holy Spirit’s special office to be the Comforter of Christ’s people—and He makes the soul either to sit still at the feet of Jesus, to listen to His gracious words, or else to run with cheerful, yet restful alacrity on His errands, for there is such a thing as rest in running in His holy service!  
Now, dear Friend, if you have these three things—the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit—I am sure I need not stay to prove to you that in your experience you have realized what it is to enjoy rest for your soul! Do you all know what it is thus to rest in the Lord? I thank God that I do! I feel, especially at certain times, that I could not ask the Lord for anything more than He has given me. I could not wish anything altered, I could not desire to be in any other state—no, I do not even wish to be in Heaven at such times as those to which I am referring! When I sit down beneath His shadow with great delight and His banner over me is love, and His fruit is sweet unto my taste, it is a little Heaven on earth—the vestibule of the palace of the great King! Many of you must know what this rest is—I feel sure that you do!  
II. This fact makes it rather sad work to turn to the second division of my subject which is that SOMETIMES THE BELIEVER LEAVES THAT REST. He should not do so—it is most grievous that he does but, alas, he does, as many of us are only too well aware by painful personal experience.  
Sometimes, he leaves it through affliction and especially if that affliction comes from man. The Psalmist tells us that in his haste, he said, “All men are liars.” Perhaps he said some other naughty things for which he was sorry afterwards. It is not always easy to be calm and prudent when you are provoked—and to be quite restful when everybody speaks ill of you, or tries to lay traps to catch you. But the child of God should so try to master himself that all the dogs that bark can no more disturb him than the baying of a hound would turn the moon out of her nightly course. Happy and blessed is that man whose heart is fixed so that he can sing and give praise even though his adversary is all the while speaking bitterly against him. Yet the flesh is very frail, and aches and pains of body as well as cruel slanders against the character will sometimes turn the Christian aside from his restful state. He is not quiet and calm. He is in a hurry, the leisure of his heart is broken and he is in great confusion. God save us from getting into such a sorrowful condition as that! For, if we had more confidence in our God we would have less confusion in our own experience. We would be much more restful if we did but do our God the justice of trusting Him at all times, for He can never fail us!  
I have known some Christians to be driven from their restful state through a lack of submission to the Divine Will. O dear Friends, when you have been in sharp trials. When things have gone awry with you and, especially, if some beloved object of your heart’s affection is taken from you, then you have had a quarrel with your God! It is a very sad thing that we should ever differ from Infinite Love, or think that we know better than Eternal Wisdom, or begin to suspect the Grace of the Most High! It is sorrowful that this should ever be the case with any of us and we cannot, without many tears, confess that we have sometimes had a dispute with God about what He has been doing with us. And then, of course, we could not rest, for, in addition to our other sorrows, our wise and loving Father chastised us for our naughtiness. He would not spare us for all our crying, but He went on with His own designs concerning us even while we were so willful and rebellious!  
Perhaps He even chastened us more because of that rebellion. We may be sure that we shall never truly rest in the Lord while we have a stubborn will! Until every desire learns to lay its head on Christ’s bosom and is fully satisfied with Him, we shall never be at perfect peace. There is, for each one of us, a modified agony and bloody sweat until, like our Lord, we can truthfully say to our Heavenly Father, “Not my will, but Yours, be done” That lack of submission to God lies at the root of half our unrest. We must submit to Him—it would be well for us if we did so at once.  
Some Christians lose their rest through lack of contentment. They are very happy in their present condition, for God has greatly blessed them, but their eyes catch sight of a Christian who is better off than they are and, straightway they want to have as much as he has. They are not quite so well dressed as that Brother is and they wish that they were. Their wife and family do not look, as the world says, quite so “respectable” as his and, sometimes in their folly, they will throw themselves out of a happy position in life, where they have the privileges of the means of Grace, and go into a state of spiritual starvation just for the sake of being a little better-off in temporal things, which is both foolish and wrong!  
Now, until we are perfectly content with what the Lord appoints for us, we shall not have rest unto our souls. Until we can honestly say— *“To Your will I leave the rest,  
Grant me but this one request—  
Both in life and death to prove  
Tokens of Your special love,”*  
we shall never know what it is to enjoy full rest of heart.  
I fear that there are many Christians who lose their rest in another way, namely, through the world’s joys. Have you ever been with a party of friends where there has been a great deal of mirth and very little Divine Grace? If so, have you not felt, when you got home, that you could not pray as you were known to do? Sometimes you have been taking your recreation properly enough, but you have not carried Christ with you as you should have done—and you have found, after a while, that your rest has gone. Laughter and merriment may do you untold harm unless they are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer—if they are so sanctified, they may not cause us to leave our rest.  
Frequently, too, Christian people lose their rest through allowing some conscious sin. Christ and you will not long keep company with one another if you permit anything in your heart, or speech, or shop, or home that is not according to His mind! His communion is with “the poor in heart for they shall see God.” But if sin is knowingly harbored, communion with Christ will not be enjoyed. The old Puritan was right when he said, “Sinning will make you leave off communing, or else communing will make you leave off sinning,” for the indulgence of any known sin is not compatible with a close walk with God. If, Beloved, you and I get at a distance from God. If we follow Christ afar off, as Peter did. If we grow cold in heart, if we are neglectful of prayer, if the Word of God is not the subject of our constant study, if we get worldly and carnal like so many of our fellow Christians are, we shall soon find that the rest of our soul is gone.

It is a great mercy if you know when it is gone. It is a terrible thing to lose the joy of the Lord and the rest of your spirit and yet to be hardly aware that it is so with you. There is a very simple simile of this state of things, but it is a useful one. You know that a hen, if she has some eggs under her, will keep on sitting. You may take half her eggs away, you may take three-fourths of them away—but she still keeps on sitting, for I suppose she cannot count. Now, there are some Christians who are very much like that hen—they lose the most of their Grace, yet they are just as happy as they were before. But, Beloved, your spiritual sense ought to be something much higher than the instinct of a poor silly bird! Your care of the Divine Grace entrusted to your charge ought to be something far superior to the care of a sitting hen over her eggs! To lose a little Grace is to lose a great deal. To miss even five minutes communion with Christ is to lack an incalculable blessing! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, if you have lost the blessed rest you once enjoyed, do not be satisfied to remain in that condition. Do not sing, with Cowper— *“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,  
How sweet their memory still!”—*  
unless you can also say with him—  
*“But now I find an aching void  
The world can never fill.”*  
Never be happy unless you are truly resting in Jesus!  
III. That brings us to our third point, which is that THE BELIEVER, WHEN HE HAS GONE AWAY FROM HIS REST, SHOULD RETURN TO IT and the sooner he does, the better. Return at once, dear Friends, if you have gone away from your rest. As Noah’s dove came back to him, fly back to Christ, who is your Noah, your Rest, for that is the meaning of the name.  
And I would argue with you to come back, first, because it is quite certain that you can never rest anywhere else. A man who knows not the Lord Jesus Christ can find rest in many places—such rest as it is. Give him a large estate, abundance of money and plenty of worldly friends, and you will find him quite content with those things. Like the mole, which has its home in the earth, he will go and burrow and make his home there. An eagle cannot do that and you are one of God’s eagles if you are a Believer in Jesus Christ! Neither in wealth, nor in honor, nor in pleasure, nor in conjugal domestic comfort, can you ever find perfect rest! You have eaten the white bread of Heaven, so your mouth is out of taste for the brown bread of earth. You might have been satisfied with the world if you had never known Christ, but you are spoilt for that now.  
A countryman who has lived all his life in a lonely village where he never heard any music, might be charmed when he first listened to one of our street organs, but let him hear some of the sweet strains of true music, then the noise of the street organ jars upon his ears and he cannot endure it! So, Beloved, your ears have been attuned to something better than the world’s merriment that can never satisfy you. To you there is only one rest—and you must come back to it. Some of you backsliders have come in here tonight—you have not been here lately, and you have been trying to be happy and comfortable apart from God—but, as surely as the Lord loves you, you will have to come back to Him and, the longer you stay away, the more bitter will be your weeping and lamentation when you do come back. Oh, that you would be wise and return at once, and never wander away again! You know too much and you have felt too much to ever rest except in Christ, so do not attempt it!  
Further, this unrest puts you out of order for everything. I should like to put the question to you, who love the Lord, but are not perfectly at rest in Him—Does not your present state very much spoil your devotions? You cannot pray as you used to do when you had such a sweet sense of the love of God—you know that you have not the power in prayer that you had—God does not hear you, now, as He once did! You used to run to Him with your request and come back with the favor you had asked of Him! But now you ask many times, yet you receive no reply. The reason is that you are walking contrary to Him and, therefore, He walks contrary to you.  
Does not this lack of restfulness also decrease your power of working for Christ? You cannot plead with a sinner as you used to do. You cannot speak to the anxious as you once did for, while your own soul is in the dark, although you may wish to give light to others, you feel that you cannot do it. If you really wish to serve the Lord effectively, you must have the joy of the Lord to be your strength.  
Then, do you not think that your lack of rest is putting you into a state in which you are very liable to be tempted and to be overcome? “The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.” And they are very sensible conies to do so, for there are many beasts of prey to seek their lives, but they run into the rocks and so they are safe. If you are out of your Rock, you are, like the coney, exposed to danger—so run back again as quickly as you can! You are never so safe as when you dwell in the wounded side of Jesus, peacefully resting in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit.  
There is one thing more that I must say to those of you who are not thus resting. That is, this unrest can do no possible good. I say this to myself as well as to you, for I, too, have sometimes erred in that way. I am ashamed to confess that it is so, for it ought not to have been the case, and I feel that I am more guilty than some of you in having done so. But I never yet have found any good come of a state of unrest. When I have not rested in God about everything, I have never found things improve any the more for all my worrying. Suppose a farmer grumbles against God because the wheat is spoiling—does his grumbling save it? Suppose a tradesman begins quarrelling with God because business is dull—he will not bring one more customer to his shop by all his complaining! No, there is no good in grumbling, and no use in complaining. The very best thing that you can do for yourself is just to come back and rest in God and say, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him. I have done all I can that was right for me to do, but I know that it is vain for me to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness unless He is pleased to send the increase. So I leave it all with Him. I will not fret and worry any longer. I cannot improve matters if I do, so I will just leave everything in the Lord’s hands.”  
That is a right decision, my Brothers and Sisters, for the end of your heart’s controversy will be the beginning of your heart’s rest. So, “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of yours heart.” But if you will be unbelieving, if you will rebel and revolt against your God, you shall be smitten more and more and no rest will come to you at all. So cry with the Psalmist, “Return to your rest, O my soul” and not only say it, but actually return at once unto your rest!  
IV. The last thing about which I am going to speak to you is this. THE BELIEVER HAS ONE EXCELLENT ENCOURAGEMENT TO RETURN. “Return to your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”  
The Psalmist tells us in detail what the Lord had done for him or, rather, he tells the Lord—“For You have delivered my soul from death.” In the fourth verse, He prayed, “O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” That was a single prayer, but he received a triple answer to it, for God is always “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.” So the Psalmist proved it and he was able to say to the Lord, “You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from falling.” Now, Believer, you ought to come back and rest in God because you have received from Him these three marks of His Divine favor.  
First, He has delivered your soul from death. You will never die the second death. You are a saved man! For you, as a Believer in Christ, death has lost its sting. You may die, after a fashion, yet living and believing in Jesus you shall never see death in the full sense of that term. For you there are no flaming fires of wrath, no bottomless pit, no curse of, “Depart.” Your soul has been delivered from death! Now, if that does not make you happy, what will? Why, my dear Friends, the fact that God has saved our soul from death ought to fill our hearts with perpetual delight! Suppose I should be starved to death? Still, it is a small matter now that my soul is delivered from forever going to Hell! Suppose I had to live in poverty and obscurity, and die like the martyrs at the stake? Well, what of that? There is an everlasting crown that fades not away that will abundantly recompense all!  
“Strike, Lord,” said Luther, “now that You have heard me! Do what You will with me, now that You have delivered my soul from death.” I know how very poor you are, my dear Friend, and what grievous burdens you have to carry, but still, do not forget that the Lord has delivered your soul from death! You may be very poor, and very sick, and very sad, but you can never be lost! You may be laughed at by the ungodly, but you can never be cast into Hell. Blessed be God for this! Surely, that is one thing to make you glad and to encourage you to return unto your rest.  
Next, the Psalmist says, “You have delivered my eyes from tears.” And the Lord has done the same for many of us. We have no cause for grief now. “No, cause for grief?” exclaims one. No, none whatever! “But I have lost my dear mother! Shall I not weep?” Well, she loved the Lord, so she is gone to Heaven. She is now before the Throne of the Most High. So, if you weep because you have lost her, then immediately begin to sing with joy because she is up among the angels! “But I have lost my little child who was so very dear to me.” Oh, well, in that case you are mother to one who is praising God day and night! So wipe those tears away. I rather like the idea of a young person, at Brighton, who asked that she might have grey horses to draw her to her funeral. Why not? Why always have black ones? Why not have the white horses of delight? Let those who linger here sorrow that their loved ones have gone, but let them not be so ungenerous as not to sympathize in the eternal joy upon which righteous souls have entered! No, wipe your tears away, for “you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, they also, who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”

“Oh, but,” cries another tried Friend, “I have real cause for sorrow because I suffer so much and I am so poor.” Well, if it is so, it will all be over soon and remember what the Apostle says, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight, of glory.” “Yes,” you say, “but, still, you do not know how much I suffer.” No, I do not, and you do not know how much I suffer, but I know this—if the two of us put all our sufferings together, they are not worthy to be compared with the eternal love of the blessed God who sent us all these aches and pains that we feel! They are all sent by Him in love, so why should we cry over them? He has wiped our tears away, so let us not weep any more, or, if tears must come, let the salt that is in them tend to our sanctification. Do not let us shed one rebellious tear—no, not even if all we have in the world were taken from us!—  
*“Why should the soul a drop moan  
Who has a fountain near—  
A fountain which will always run  
With waters sweet and clear?”*  
If I have all things, I have them in my God. And if all things are gone from me, I would find them all again in Him!  
Now, lastly, God has also delivered our feet from falling as He did in the case of the Psalmist. I know that one reason why so many do not fully rest is because they are afraid that they shall fall from Grace—afraid that they shall dishonor their profession and so on. Now, dear Friends, I hope that you will never get rid of the godly fear of falling into sin and never lose that holy insecurity with regard to yourself—but do not let that feeling extend to your God! You know that our Lord Jesus Christ said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” He has delivered your feet from falling, so He will keep you! Therefore begin to praise Him and bless Him this very moment! Cast away that fear of being cast away, and sing Jude’s doxology, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”  
No, you have nothing at all to fret about! Your soul is delivered from death, your eyes from tears and your feet from failing—so rest, rest, rest, rest! You will glorify God by resting. One of the highest acts of devotion is to rest in the Lord. God grant it to you now, especially at His Table, for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 85**

In my brief comments upon this Psalm, I shall not feel bound to keep to the immediate occasion for which it was written, but shall seek to find a use for it in the present circumstances of God’s saints.

Verse 1. Lord, You have been favorable unto the land: You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. Whenever you are in a low state of mind or heart, remember God’s past loving kindnesses. Recall the record of what He has done for His people in ages long gone by, for He is the same God forever and ever and, therefore, what He has done in the past, He will do in the future. As the wise man said, “The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.” It is certainly so concerning God’s dealings “Lord You have been favorable unto Your land,” even when it was stained with sin, “You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.” Even when that captivity was brought upon the people by their own fault. Lord, bring back my captivity! Be favorable unto me! Deliver me from my spiritual declensions and give me back my joy and peace.

2. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people, you have covered all their sin. Selah. What a sweet subject for our meditation we found, last  
Lord’s-Day morning [Sermon #1492, Volume 25—THE FIRST NOTE OF MY SONG— read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] in those

words of the Psalmist, “Who forgives all your iniquities”! Now, if God has indeed blotted out the sin of His people, what a plea this is to use with Him for all that we still need from Him! Will He pardon us and yet leave us to perish? Will He pay such a ransom price as the blood of His wellbeloved Son to set us free from the bondage of sin, and then will He not help us even to the end? Will He not lift up our heavy heart and revive our drooping spirit? Ah, that He will if we know how to plead His former mercy and to urge upon Him that because He has forgiven our iniquity and covered all our sin, He should now heal our diseases, redeem our life from destruction and crown us with loving kindness and tender mercies.

3, 4. You have taken away all Your wrath: You have turned Yourself from the fierceness of Your anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease. “Let us have a special application of the general mercy. Your wrath to Your children has passed away, so let us no longer sit down and cower beneath it, fearful of its terrors. Lord, bring us back to You! Our heart desires conversion, but You alone can give it to us to the fullest. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and we shall be turned.”

6. Will You be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? “You might well do so if You were dealing with us only according to the strict requirements of Your righteous Law, but we are Your children, Lord, and is a father always angry with his children? You have forgiven us our iniquity and, therefore, the great cause of Your wrath against us is gone. Now, O Lord, reveal Your love to us! Let us not any longer be under the sense of our guilt, or feel the absence of the joy and peace which You give to those whom You forgive.”

6. Will You not revive us again: that Your people may rejoice in You? “We have got down very low, great God. We have been, these last six days, mixing with the world and, perhaps, we have forgotten You. Come to us, we pray You. Give us fresh life! Revive us again! Many a time have You, spiritually, raised us up as from the grave’s mouth. Will You not do it again? All that You have done for us in the past will be lost if You do not continue Your mercy to us. ‘Will You not revive us again?’ You love to see us happy and You are, Yourself, the Happy God! Oh, make us happy, too, by reviving us, ‘that Your people may rejoice in You’!”

7. Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation. So far, the Psalm is a prayer. Now the Psalmist seems to stop and wait for the answer to his supplication. Beloved, always do that when you pray. When you have spoken to God, wait for Him to speak to you. Do not let it appear that your prayer needs no answer, but really expect a reply to it and then, in patience and in silence, wait for it.

8. I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly. For, if they do, their darkness will return and they will again have to mourn their Lord’s absence. Perhaps the rod will fall more heavily upon them and their souls will sink into a deeper despondency. For a Christian to once be a fool, is a sad thing, but for him to turn again to folly is a multiplied form of iniquity which God will surely punish!

9. Surely his salvation is near them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. O beloved Brothers and Sisters, lay hold on that salvation which is near you and exalt in it! And even now let your spirits feel the glow of His glory shining in your soul!

10. Mercy and truth are met together. But only at one place—the Cross of Calvary, where Jesus died. There, “mercy and truth are met together.”  
10. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Through Christ’s death, sin has been punished, sinners are saved, God’s Law is vindicated and the depths of His mercy are displayed! “Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”  
11. Truth shall spring out of the earth. Promises which lay hidden in God’s Word, like seeds buried in the earth, shall spring up before our eyes like flowers carpeting the earth with beauty! “Truth shall spring out of the earth.”  
11. And righteousness shall look down from Heaven. As if so pleased with the state of things brought about by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ that it flung up the windows of Heaven to look down and see this great sight! “Righteousness shall look down from Heaven.”  
12, 13. Yes, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps. May God thus revive us, by His Holy Spirit, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—764, 711, 708  
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AN EPISTLE ILLUSTRATED BY A PSALM  
NO. 2538

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 10, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, **In connection with the dedication of the Jubilee House, which commemorated the completion of the beloved Pastor’s 50th year, June 19, 1884**.

**“You have pushed me violently that I might fall: but the LORD helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.” Psalm 118:13, 14.**

In memory of my 50th birthday, our friends have built a house at the back of the Tabernacle, to be used for the purposes of the Church, and to be called JUBILEE HOUSE. It will be a lasting Ebenezer bearing this witness, “Hitherto has the Lord helped us.” I was asked to select a text of Scripture to put upon a stone which all could read and, thereby, be made to understand the meaning of the house and its name. The chosen text of Scripture (Psalm 118:13-18) was cut into a stone after a fashion, but the words were not set forth in full—the mason thought it sufficient to inscribe the chapter and the verses. Now, as people do not generally carry their Bibles with them to refer to, this appeared to me to be a failure. I like a matter made boldly clear, so that he may run that reads it! Therefore, I have had the words, themselves, engraved upon a large slab of marble, to be read by all of our day and by coming generations, also. I believe that such memorials silently work for lasting good and the more of them the better. In this case, at least, if there are not “sermons in stones,” there will be texts of sermons, which is even better.

The passage which is thus made conspicuous is a truthful summary of my personal experience in reference to the faithfulness of God. It may seem to be a long inscription, but I could not afford to give up a line of it. David wrote of himself and I can appropriate every word as descriptive of God’s dealings with me. Let me read the whole of it in your hearing— “YOU HAVE PUSHED ME VIOLENTLY THAT I MIGHT FALL: BUT THE LORD HELPED ME. THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG, AND HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION. THE VOICE OF REJOICING AND SALVATION IS IN THE TABERNACLES OF THE RIGHTEOUS: THE RIGHT HAND OF THE LORD DOES VALIANTLY. THE RIGHT HAND OF THE LORD IS EXALTED: I SHALL NOT DIE, BUT LIVE, AND DECLARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD. THE LORD HAS CHASTENED ME SORELY, BUT HE HAS NOT GIVEN ME OVER TO DEATH.”

You may not see why this Scripture is strikingly suitable to the occasion, but I see it most clearly and, as it is my own testimony, I will endeavor to make you sympathize with me in it by explaining it. I would say to you, “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name forever.” A life so full of the loving kindness of the Lord should yield more praise to God than any one tongue can possibly utter. “The Lord has done great things for us, thereof we are glad.” Let us, therefore, praise Him with all our hearts!

Christian experience is the richest product of Grace and it ought to be laid at the feet of the Well-Beloved from whom it comes, and to whom it belongs. What God has done for one of His people is an indication of what He will do for others of His chosen. The Lord’s Providences are promises and His benedictions are predictions. To be silent concerning the loving kindness of the Lord is a robbery of the worst kind—it is taking from our God the glory due unto His holy name.

Some are afraid to tell what the Lord has done for them—lost men would count them boastful and proud—but this is usually quite a groundless fear. A sense of the goodness of God tends to humble a man and to make him lie low at the feet of his Savior. The more conscious he is of the Grace that has been so richly bestowed upon him, the more will he realize his own unworthiness of such abounding mercy. The best of men have continually to endure severe heart-troubles and to mourn over inward failures, so that when they tell how the Lord has delivered them with His right hand and His holy arm, there is little in that confession to minister to self-conceit. The wine that is pressed from the grapes of Christian gratitude will never cause anyone to be intoxicated with pride.

It may also be remarked that many of those who never bear witness to the goodness of the Lord are quite as proud as they could very well become and, therefore, the evil of self-exaltation would seem to be a natural weed which grows on any soil. Our business is to pull up the weed and not to lay the blame of its existence on what is a harmless and even a beneficial thing. If a dim eye is apt to be dazzled with light, that is no reason why every man should put his candle under a bushel. To kill one evil by encouraging another is a doubtful gain and a sure loss. Dear Brother, if the Lord has dealt well with you, publish it to the honor of His name and to the strengthening of your brethren! God has not blessed you for yourself, or given you bread that you may eat your morsel alone! But He intends that everything He entrusts to you should be employed for the good of all your brethren. It were a pity that a householder should be too modest to feed his family, or a Christian so much afraid of egotism as to refuse to cheer his fellow travelers.

I would stir up all experienced Believers to speak well of the name of the Lord. Do not conceal the loving kindness of the Lord. It is too much our nature to tell out our sorrows—let us not be silent as to our joys. If we fall into a little trouble, we run from one to another and repeat it till it eats into our souls like a burning acid. We do not let the funeral bells be still, but the marriage peals lie quiet year after year. Let us be eloquent upon our mercies and silent upon our miseries! Why should we have a shout for our complaints and scarcely a whisper for our thanksgivings? Shall we leave behind us no memorials but gravestones? Generations gone before us have cheered us into confidence by the records which they have left behind of the Lord’s great goodness—shall we not, also, bequeath a testimony to our descendants? Do we mean to pass on to them a flying roll written within and without with lamentations? Shall they inherit a dreary desert of unbelief? Far from it! We will write them songs of praises to be sung upon their stringed instruments from century to century! We will engrave upon eternal brass the inscription, “The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever, and His truth throughout all generations!”

We now come to the first verses of our chosen inscription—“You have pushed me violently that I might fall: but the LORD helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.” David remembered his past conflicts—the scars were in his flesh. I will handle the text in the way which the Apostle points out to me in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the third, fourth and fifth verses— “Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed.” First, in my text, I see tribulation and patience. “You have pushed me violently that I might fall.” In the second place, I see patience and experience. “But the LORD helped me.” And in the third place, I see experience and hope that makes not ashamed. “The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.”

I. First, then, in the text I see TRIBULATION AND PATIENCE—“You have pushed me violently that I might fall.”  
Perhaps, in that word, “you,” David points to all his enemies as if they had been so united in their hate and so undivided in their attacks, that he looked at them as one single person. If they had not one neck, they were guided by one head and excited by one heart. Yet David had many enemies—so many that in another place he compares them to bees compassing him about. It may be for the information of some who have lately become Christians, if I tell them that as surely as ever they are the followers of Jesus, they will find themselves the object of enmity. That same Master who has come to make men peaceable, also says in another sense, “Think not I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” In bringing in peace, we necessarily contend with the contentious. In establishing righteousness, we inevitably wage war against injustice and oppression. Truth must always strive against error and holiness must battle against sin. Do not expect to be wafted to Heaven on the wings of fame—you may have to force your way there in the teeth of slander!  
Our pilgrimage may cause us blistered feet, for it is no holiday trip, but a stern march. It is an up-hill journey to Glory and that man had need be a hardy mountaineer who resolves to ascend into the hill of the Lord and to dwell in His Holy Place. You will be attacked on all sides— yes, even from within. Your own household may furnish you the most desperate of your foes—yes, your own bed may supply the cruelest adversary. From every corner an arrow may be aimed at you. In work and rest, in the world and in the Church you may be called upon to draw your sword! Strange is it that we may do the maddest actions and awaken no opposition—but the moment we become truly wise, all men are up in arms against us! Is there nothing to ridicule in all the world save the fear of God? Many of God’s people, both in private life and in public stations, find that their piety acts upon the ungodly as a red rag upon a bull—they close their eyes and rush fiercely to the attack. The ribald throng no sooner catch sight of a Christian than they cry, “Here is a target for our witticisms. Let us be sarcastic with him.”  
If you do not meet with that kind of persecution, yet you will have to endure affliction and temptation in the world. He who is born for the Crown is bound for the Cross. A thousand snares are laid in your path and only He who made you a Christian can cover your head and carry you safely through the bombardment which awaits you. “They compassed me about like bees,” says David. That is to say, they were very many and very furious. When bees are excited, they are among the most terrible of assailants. Their stings are sharp and they inject a venom which sets the blood on fire. I read, the other day, of a traveler in Africa who learned this by experience. Negroes were pulling his boat up the river and as the rope trailed along, it disturbed a bee’s nest, and in a moment the bees were upon him in his cabin. He said that he was stung in the face, the hands and the eyes. He was, all over, a mass of fire, and to escape from his assailants he plunged into the river, but they still persecuted him, attacking his head whenever it emerged from the water. After what he suffered from them, he said he would sooner meet two lions at once, or a whole herd of buffaloes, than ever be attacked by bees, again! So that the simile which David gives is a very striking one.  
A company of mean-spirited, wicked men, who are no bigger than bees, mentally or spiritually, can get together and sting a good man in a thousand places till he is well-near maddened by their scorn, their ridicule, their slander and their misrepresentation! Their very littleness gives them the power to wound with impunity. Such has been the experience of some of us, especially in days now happily past. For one, I can say, I grew used to falsehood and spite. The stings, at last, caused me no more pain than if I had been made of iron! But at first they were galling enough. Do not be surprised, dear Friends, if you have the same experience. Look for it and when it comes, count it no strange thing, for in this way the saints of God have been treated in all time. Thank God the wounds are not fatal, nor of long continuance! Time brings ease and use creates hardihood. No real harm has come to any of us who have run the gauntlet of abuse—not even a bruise remains.

But I do not think that this is quite all that the Psalmist meant. He intended to point out some grand adversary who had led the attack—“You have thrust sore at me.” Perhaps it was Saul. Perhaps Ahithophel. Perhaps his own son, Absalom. In our case, we remember no adversary but Satan—“you”—I think I see him now before me. That dread fallen spirit, the arch-enemy of our souls. “O Satan, you have thrust sorely at me!” Many a child of God must utter this exclamation. It is no fault of Satan’s if we are not quite destroyed! It is not for want of malice, or subtlety, or fury, or perseverance on the devil’s part if we still hold the field! He has met us many times, using all kinds of weapons, shooting from the right hand and from the left. He has tempted us to pride and despair, to care and to carelessness, to presumption and to idleness, to self-confidence and to mistrust of God! We are not ignorant of his devices, nor inexperienced in his cruelties. He has fixed himself in our memory so that we recognize him and cry, “You have thrust sorely at me.”  
I know that I am addressing many saints of God who can use David’s language with emphasis—“You have pushed me violently that I might fall,” for I dwell among a tried and tempted people. The battle between the soul of the Believer and the devil is a stern one. No doubt there are multitudes of inferior spirits who tempt men and tempt them successfully, too, but they are much more easily put aside by godly men than their great leader can be. Apollyon is master of legions and possesses the highest degree of power and craftiness. He who has once stood foot to foot with him will know that Christian was, indeed, hard put to it in the Valley of Humiliation, when the dragon stopped the pilgrim’s way and made him fight for his life. Bunyan says—“In this combat no man can imagine, unless he has seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight! He spoke like a dragon and, on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian’s heart. I never saw him, all the while, give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword. Then, indeed, he did smile and looked upward—but it was the most dreadful sight I ever saw.”  
No Christian will find much to smile at while he is contending for his faith, his hope, his life with this most cruel of foes! Messengers of Satan buffet us terribly, but Satan, himself, wounds desperately. Therefore we are wisely taught to pray, “Deliver us from the Evil One.” Single combat with the arch-enemy will strain every muscle of the soul and pain every nerve of the spirit. It will force the cold sweat from the brow and make the heart leap with palpitations of fear and thus, in some degree, bring us to our Gethsemane and make us feel that the pains of Hell have gotten hold of us. This prince of darkness has a sharp sword, great cunning of fence, tremendous power of aim, and boundless malice of heart! And thus he is no mean adversary, but one whom it is a terrible trial to meet. In his dread personality is contained a mass of danger for us poor mortals and, as we think of our experience of him in the past, we cry with emphasis, “You have thrust sorely at me!”  
Carefully notice that while David thus speaks of one enemy, he indicates the subtlety of his attack by the language which he uses—“You have thrust sorely at me.” That is not a cutting with the edge of the sword, but a piercing with the rapier, a stabbing with a dagger! A practiced soldier may guard himself against the full swing of the sword, but the rapier leaps in all of a sudden and reaches the heart. Armor protected the ancient warrior from the sword, but the thrust found out the joint of the harness and penetrated the body. Thus Satan deals with us. We stand upon our guard against him and we fancy we have shielded ourselves at all points from head to foot. We watch him, for we are not ignorant of his devices, And when he smites, we turn his blow aside. Again falls his stroke and we ward it off, but just when we half think that we may rest a minute, the rapier is thrust in and the blood flows! Ah, me, I have heard of a ruler who, in olden times, wore armor all day and all night long for a full year, for he was aware that an assassin dogged his footsteps. But it grew burdensome to wear this heavy suit continually, so he took it off and within five minutes he was stabbed and dead! Mind that you never remove your armor, for the foe who seeks your destruction watches you so carefully that he will perceive your momentary carelessness.  
Even with your armor on, you may not be secure, for he knows where the joints are, where one piece of the harness fits into another and how to give his thrust where it will count. O God, if Your servants are kept throughout life secure from such a foe as this, how they will glorify Your blessed name! In each case where, “that Evil One touches him not,” the Lord will have a grateful minstrel to sound forth His praise eternally, even as I do this day!  
Remember, also, dear Friends, that the design of these assaults is most malicious. The objective of the enemy is to make us sin—“You have pushed me violently that I might fall.” That is, either that I might fall from my upright walk in true doctrine, or that I might decline from my first love, or, worst of all, that I might stumble into open sin and dishonor my profession. Satan would not be content for us to stagger—he desires that we fall. He has fallen and he would hurl us down if he could. This he especially desires for those who take the lead in the Church of God. If they were seen to fall, the devil would publish the wretched news through all the streets of Hades! The triumphant shout, “A champion of God has fallen,” would be heard both on earth and in Hell and it would cause great rejoicing! If, in this warfare, “The standard-bearer falls, as fall full well he may,” for I never heard, yet, of a more deadly fray, then the wish of Apollyon will be gratified and his wretched soul will feel as much of satisfaction as its misery can know! Oh, what a mercy to be kept standing where the ground is so slippery, where so many have fallen, where we, ourselves, are so apt to slide, and where such cunning foes are ready to push us down!  
What gratitude we owe to Him who has given His angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways! How earnestly should we adore Him who has kept us from falling and who will still do so till He presents us faultless before His Father’s face! In the course of 50 years, many have been the times when my feet had almost gone—and I cannot forget them. I remember traveling in the Alps over a road that they called Hell Place because the rocks were so terribly smooth that neither men nor mules could get sure foothold. I was glad when that bit of the road was passed, even as I am this day happy to have come so far on my journey. “When I said, my foot slips; Your mercy, O Lord, held me up.” I would at this moment bless the Lord who keeps the feet of His saints.  
II. I turn from the first to the second head, that I may speak of patience and experience—“You have pushed me violently that I might fall, but the LORD helped me.”  
It would be well to set those words to music and let the whole congregation of the faithful sing aloud with glad hearts, “But the Lord helped me.” The bass would sound well from a venerable Brother who would roll it forth ponderously, “The Lord helped me.” And many an aged Sister would take another part and sing, in a higher key, “The Lord helped me.” Fathers and mothers, who have had a large family of children about them and have, by a hard struggle, brought them up, will each one sing, “Hitherto has the Lord helped me,” while the lone sufferer will sing, “I was brought low, and He helped me.” The younger Believers, though they have not gone so far on the journey, have, nevertheless, had their share of trial and of Grace—they also can each one say, “The Lord helped me.” Let it go round the assembly, till every child of God has added his note and the enemy, in his deep abodes, can hear us shout exultingly, “You have pushed me violently that I might fall: but Jehovah helped me!”  
Helped me to what? Well, helped me, first, to believe, for David evidently had trusted in the Lord and found it better than trusting in man. Satan makes a special attack upon our faith. If he could destroy it, he would have captured the citadel of our spiritual life. But this he cannot do. Faith is a dear child of the Holy Spirit and He that creates faith will not desert it, but keep it as the apple of His eye. He gives more Grace and increases our faith! He enables us to trust our God and to hold fast by His way. It is He who has helped our faith to “laugh at impossibilities and say, ‘It shall be done.’” In the dark hour, the Lord has given us to see by faith and in the storm He has made us to ride the billows by faith. That is the great matter, for so long as faith survives, hope is not sick unto death! I do not doubt that some of you wonder to-night that your faith has survived the putrid skepticism of the age, the stagnant atmosphere of indifference, the foul air of heresy which surrounds all things. If it were possible, the enemies of Christ would deceive the very elect, but the godly live by faith!  
Next, the Lord has not only helped us to believe, but He has helped us to pray. When David was brought low, then he prayed, and from this holy practice we have never desisted, though tempted many a time to do so. Long waiting for an answer has been an inducement to many of you to cease from pleading. But, like the poor importunate widow, you have pressed your suit and now you are able to bear witness that it is no vain thing to wait upon the Lord! Who was it that kept you pleading? Was it not the Lord who helped you to continue in prayer? You would soon have heard the devil say, “Behold, he has ceased to pray,” if the Lord had not daily led you to the Mercy Seat and enabled you to plead, there, the sprinkled blood. The fire of devotion would have been quenched by the black fiend who threw water upon it if it had not been secretly kept alive by One who was hidden behind the wall and secretly poured oil upon the flames! Men do not cry to their Heavenly Father, in their closets, unless the Divine Spirit draws them into this hallowed communion! Jacob wrestled with the Angel because the Angel wrestled with him. When the Holy Spirit creates in us the inwrought prayer, it is sure to be an effectual prayer—but the ineffectual prayers of our own unaided spirit are such failures that we are soon induced to give them up. Help in prayer is the best of help! God never fails that man in public whom He has strengthened in private. So long as our infirmities are helped by the Spirit in prayer, we may rest assured that they will also be helped in all other respects. When blind Samson began to pray for strength, it was a sign that, notwithstanding all that the enemy had done against him, he was yet to win a great victory and declare again that the Lord had helped him!

Surely, this text also means that as the enemy tries to make us fall, so God has helped us to stand. O child of God, if you have maintained your integrity. If with all your losses you have never been unrighteous, but have been honest before God. If, under slander you have not lost your temper, nor rendered railing for railing. If, when much tempted of the devil, you have still said, “Get you behind me, Satan,” and have strived against him, then you are ready with all your heart to Bless the Lord who has helped you! The way of the upright is beset with snares and he who has run therein for many years without stumbling is, indeed, favored of the Lord!  
When I think of some professors of my acquaintance who have grievously defiled their garments, I hope that they will be saved, but I know that it must be “so as by fire.” This reflection makes me pray God that others of us and especially that I, myself, may be graciously preserved so that we do not transgress. How can we stand, so feeble, so encompassed with infirmity and tempted in so many points, unless our God shall help us? Hitherto He has helped us and, therefore, we look forward to the future with a joyous confidence!—  
*“He who has led will lead  
All through the wilderness.  
He who has fed will feed.  
He who has blessed will bless.  
He who has heard your cry  
Will never close His ears.  
He who has marked your faintest sigh  
Will not forget your tears.  
He loves always, fails never.  
We rest on Him today, forever!”*  
Beside that, God has helped us to fight. “You have thrust sorely at me,” says David, “But the LORD helped me.” Helped him to do what? Why, to thrust back, again, quite as sorely against his spiritual foes! He says of the bees, in the verse to which we have referred, “In the name of the Lord will I destroy them.” Some of us can thank God that we have kept our fighting arm in trim till this very day. A bow of steel is broken by our arms even now. We have not changed our testimony for Christ, nor cast away our confidence which has great recompense of reward. We have been sorely put to it by the Rationalists of the age, but still we have held up the Gospel and nothing but the Gospel! And still we cry, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Dear Brothers and Sisters, take care that when the battle rages you do not stand altogether on the defensive. Carry the war into the enemy’s country! Let us not only hold our own, but seek to win souls for Christ! Let us put Satan on the defensive—it is much better for us to attack him than to be attacked by him. Let us give him cause to look to his own domains, that he may not have so much force to spare for his onslaughts upon us.  
When poor Christian was down under Apollyon’s foot, his life was nearly pressed out of him, but he saw that as God would have it, the sword which had fallen out of his hand was just within his reach. So he stretched out his hand and grasped that, “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” and therewith he gave his adversary such a terrible stab that he spread his dragon-wings and flew away! Oh, to give the fiend such a stab as that! Let us proclaim the promises! Let us proclaim the Gospel! Let us publish everywhere the Free Grace of God—and in this way we shall turn the battle to the gate and cause those who pursued us to be, themselves, pursued. Hallelujah for the Cross of Christ! We bear it forward into the ranks of the foe, confident of victory! Our courage fails not, neither does our hope wax faint—the Lord who has helped us is the God of victories! “The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.”  
III. I will conclude this meditation with the third head, which is, EXPERIENCE AND A HOPE THAT MAKES NOT ASHAMED.  
What says the voice of experience? “The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.” When you are home, I wish you would read the song of Moses which the children of Israel sang at the Red Sea. You will find that these words are borrowed from that grand old song. One of our proverbs says, “Old songs and old wine are the best.” Certainly they lose nothing by age and we may truly say of this blessed verse that it is all the sweeter because there is a ring of Miriam’s timbrels about it—and we note the sound of dancing feet as we read the words! Hear you not the glorious shout, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation”? Come then, Brothers and Sisters, let us sing this song upon our stringed instruments all the days of our lives!  
First, our God has become our strength. We are weak enough, but what a power is His! He is our strength to suffer, giving us patience. He is our strength to work, working in us, with us, by us. He is our strength to fight, for it is He that girds us for the battle. The Lord is our strength— what an unfailing fountain of force! Did you say, just now, “I will speak no more in the name of the Lord”? Did you complain of being dull and weak? Have you forgotten where your strength lies? Did you allude to your own native strength? Indeed, that is utter weakness! Complain of it as much as you please, for in you there is neither power nor wisdom! But would it not be wise to remember that your real strength is the Lord? “The Lord is my strength.” In such a case, weakness is lost, and I can say, with Paul, “When I am weak, then am I strong.”  
Did I hear you say, my dear Sister, that you would have to give up that Bible class because you do not feel equal to it? What do you mean by being equal to it? Why, that you do not seem to have the personal strength! That is no news! It is well that you remember it and are emptied of your former self-reliance! Still, believe that in you there is no spiritual power and turn at once to the Strong for strength! When a man is called to any holy work, the sooner he is persuaded that he is not, of himself, equal to it, the better! But, at the same time, it will be well for him to receive that further persuasion—“The Lord is my strength.” If the Holy Spirit takes possession of a man, or a woman, what can they not say? What can they not do? The Lord can take up the poorest worm among us and make him thresh the mountains till they become like chaff! Let us, therefore, sing this charming sonnet with all our hearts, “The Lord is my strength.” I will rely in no degree upon oratorical power, or human learning, or natural gifts, or acquired aptitude, or on anything that I have, but I will rest in the Lord alone. Brother, when God is your strength, you are girt with Omnipotence! Go to your work, whatever it may be, and believe in the Lord as to your ability to perform it.  
A Negro slave used to explain what practical faith meant in this manner—“Why, Massa, if de Lord say, ‘Sam, jump tro’ that wall,’ all Sam got to do is to jump; it’s God’s part to get him tro’ the wall.” Just so. He who gives the command will justify it by enabling us to obey it if we give our whole hearts to the doing of it. If God bids you do what is quite beyond your strength, it is yours to proceed in the way of obedience—and God will enable you to accomplish His bidding. He never did send His soldiers on a warfare at their own charges and He never will. He will supply His armies with rations, and weapons and ammunition—you can be you sure of that. He does not reap where He has not sown, nor gather where He has not strewed. He is the Lord All-Sufficient when we are most insufficient. With Him for our strength, we cannot faint, or fail, but, on the contrary, we shall renew our force and rise continually to something higher and better than before.  
Notice the next word, our God has also become our song. “The Lord is my strength and song.” I find that the commentators refer this to the period after the battle, so that it may mean, “The Lord is my strength while I am waging the war, and my song when I have won the victory.” This is an excellent sense, but another seems, to me, more clearly in the words, “The Lord is my strength and song.” Both are in the present tense—we sing while we fight! When Cromwell’s men marched to battle, singing a grand old Psalm with one accord, the battle was half won before they struck a blow! Their hearts were fortified and their arms were strengthened by their song. Do you desire a far nobler example? Your great Lord and mine, when He went to His last tremendous conflict where the powers of darkness marshaled all their strength against Him, and He strove until He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood—how did He go?  
Here is the answer, “After supper, they sang a hymn.” After they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives, that is, to Gethsemane—He went to His agony singing! That brave heart was about to be deserted by His friends and even forsaken of His God, but into that deadly contest, wherein He must be cast into the disgrace and dishonor of scourging and shameful spitting—even to that, our Champion went with a song upon His lips because the Lord was His song! So, my Friends, while we are working, let us sing! You will do your work much better if your hands keep time to a cheery strain. While we are fighting let us sing and plant our blows while we chant our hallelujahs— *“Ever this our war cry—  
Victory, victory!”*  
Let us claim the victory, anticipate it and shout it while yet we are contending! On our beds let us sing God’s high praises and magnify Him in the midst of the fires! Set your whole lives to music. Make your entire career a Psalm. Let not your life be a dirge, as it is with some, who, from morning till night, are mournfully wailing miseries. Let us not moan out, to the tune, “Job”—  
*“Lord, what a wretched land is this,  
That yields us no supply!”*  
But let us lift up our voices to some such jubilant hymn as this— *“The men of Grace have found  
Glory begun below!  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow.  
Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry!  
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground To fairer worlds on high!”*  
But what shall we sing about? Well, “The Lord is my song.” Sing the Father and His eternal love. Sing how He chose His people and made them His own before the earth was. Sing the Son of God, whose delights were with the sons of men before He came here to dwell. Tell how He took our flesh to take away our guilt. Tell how He died and rose again, and led captivity captive, and ascended up on high! Tell how He will surely come again to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords when the earth shall ring with welcome hosannas at His glorious appearing! Make that your song, but do not forget to sing the Holy Spirit’s love. Magnify the Holy Spirit, the Illuminator, Comforter, Guide, abiding Advocate and Paraclete. You will never need to cease from this song, for, “this God is our God forever and ever! He will be our Guide even unto death.” Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit!

Whenever I grow very dull through pain, or heavy through lack of sleep, I say to myself, “I will note down what I owe to God of praise, which I cannot just now pay to Him, that I may do so when I get a little better.” And then my conscience chides me, saying, “Praise Him NOW! Bless God for aching bones! Bless God for a weary head! Bless God for troubles and trials, for he who can so praise the Lord is singing a truer and more acceptable song than youth, health and happiness can present!” A seraph never praised God with an aching head. Cherubs never blessed the Lord upon a sick bed—so you will excel even the angels if you magnify the Lord in sickness! Why should you not, since you also can say, “The Lord is my strength and song”?  
The close of the text says, “and He has become my salvation.” Brothers and Sisters, after all our experience, we know that there is salvation in none but the Lord. If we have not any experience because we only began to believe in Jesus Christ five minutes ago, yet we know that He has become our salvation. The moment we trust the Savior, we are saved. But I want you to consider this little sentence and so to believe it intelligently. What do I mean when I say that you are saved? If you believe in Jesus, you are saved from the guilt of sin. Yes, bless God for pardon! But do you not know that you are also saved from the power of sin? The dominion of sin is over! It lives like a snake with its head broken. It wriggles and writhes, but its head is crashed! The power of sin in every Believer is overcome—there is no sin from which we cannot escape. There is no evil habit that we cannot cast off if we are really saved. The Lord has become our salvation from all sin!  
“Alas,” cries one, “I have to endure very fierce temptation.” Temptation in itself cannot harm you if you do not yield to it. And you need not, for the Lord has become your salvation! Temptation is, “the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” “Oh, but I am so poor and I am so sick, and I am so tried in a thousand ways!” Never mind, you are saved from all the evil which is in these trials! Affliction cannot hurt you—nothing of that kind can do you any injury, for the Lord has become your salvation. “Oh, but think of the dark, black night which may come over us in the future!” Never fear—He who has become your salvation will be your light. You are as safe in the dark as in the light, if the Lord has become your Helper. “But I have to die.” Bless God for that! It were not worth while living if we could not die! It is the very joy of this earthly life to think that it will come to an end! What would a sailor say who was on a voyage that would never bring him to a port? What would a traveler say if he was toiling along a road which would never bring him home? Blessed be God, we shall come to the pearly gates, by-and-by! Let us not be alarmed about that, for the Lord has become our salvation.  
We are saved from death—we cannot really die! We shall fall asleep, to wake up in the likeness of our Lord. Blessed sleep! Who does not long for it? “He has become my salvation,” not for a time, but forever—my sure salvation, my eternal salvation! Therefore, take courage and let us go forward in our walk and warfare, for this is our note of victory, as it was the hymn of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red Sea, “The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

[This sermon was the first in a series of four delivered by Brother Spurgeon in connection with his 50th birthday in 1884. The second was #2539; the third was sermon #2237—Volume 38 and the fourth was sermon #2540.]

Sermon #2539 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE JOY OF HOLY HOUSEHOLDS  
NO. 2539

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 17, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, **In connection with the dedication of the Jubilee House, which commemorated the completion of  
the beloved Pastor’s 50th year, June 19, 1884**.

**“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” Psalm 118:15, 16.**

A BELIEVER in Christ is not long without finding joy. He is in the land which flows with milk and honey and he will get a sip of sweetness very soon. Like Nicodemus, he comes to Jesus in the dark, but the sun is rising. When he casts himself at the foot of the Cross, his dawning has begun and, before long, he will walk in the Light of God—being justified by faith, he will have peace with God. And not only so, for he also learns to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also he has received the Atonement. This joy is in him and abounds, so that he belongs to a happy people. It is true that all Believers are not equally happy, but they have, each one of them, a right to be exceedingly glad. Some float upon a flood-tide of joy, while others drift upon the ebb, but they are all in the same stream and it is bearing them on to the ocean of perfect happiness. All who trust in Christ as they ought to do, will find a measure of this joy springing up within them, keeping company with the new life which the Holy Spirit has created. Ours is peace which passes all understanding and joy unspeakable!

This joy is contagious—it spreads like a sweet perfume. The happy man makes others happy. The man who is full of the blessedness of God overflows for others. Music is not alone for him who makes it, but for all who have ears. The happy man’s influence is first felt at home—he goes home to his own family a converted man and they soon perceive the change. He tells them of what the Lord has done, but even if he did not do so, they would soon discover by his gentleness, his love, his truth, his holiness, that something remarkable had happened to him! His actions, his words, his temper, his spirit are singularly altered and those around him can see it! He is glad and, before long, they are glad, too. When the man is better, everybody who belongs to him is the better for his improvement. When the man’s own heart rejoices, he distributes joy, even as Christ’s disciples when they received bread and fish from the hands of their Lord, divided them among the multitude, “and they did all eat, and were filled.” I trust that many of you, dear Friends, who are my associates in the Church of God, feel this to be true in your own cases, as I am sure I must confess it to be true in mine. To the glory of God’s Grace I must give the testimony. Our own God of blessing has blessed our families.

Certain Believers, however, spread joy through a large number of families—not only those to which they belong according to the flesh, but among all the families of Zion they scatter comfort! David, for instance, when he went forth and smote the enemies of his nation, caused great rejoicing in all the tabernacles of Israel. All the chosen people shared in what the champion of the Lord had done. When any man is blessed of God so that he can teach the Word, and preach it with power, he sheds joy over all the families with which he comes in contact. Aspire, dear Brothers, to shine widely, as a candle set upon a candlestick gives light to all that are in the house! First, see to it that you are truly saved, yourselves, then cry to the Lord for your own kin and labor for them till they are all brought to the Redeemer’s feet!

And then let your light shine throughout the neighborhoods wherein you dwell. It is a poor lamp which cannot be seen outside its own glass. Shine down that street from which so few ever go up to the House of God! Shine in that factory where the mass of the workers sit in darkness! Shine in that bank where few of the clerks are walking in the Light of God! Pray that you may be not merely night-lights to comfort some one sick person, but like those new gas lamps which are placed at the crossroads and make a grand illumination all round! It may be that the Lord has placed you in a trying position on purpose that you may be of more service than you could have been under more comfortable circumstances. We ought to be happy to be where we can make others happy. It should be our will to do the Lord’s will by being useful to our fellow men. We must not value our position according to the ease it brings to us, or the respectability with which it surrounds us, but by the opportunities which it affords for overcoming evil and promoting good.

I think that many Christian people would be wise to hesitate before they move from the place where they now are, even though it would be very agreeable to them to live in a more reputable locality. I say that they might hesitate to relocate because if they were gone, the very Light of God in the place would be quenched and the hope of many poor sinners would be removed. Salt can never do so much good in a box as it can effect upon meat which otherwise would corrupt. A pilot on shore may be very clever, but he cannot be useful unless he goes to sea. A river is a blessing in England, but it is beyond measure prized in Egypt or the Sudan. The Scriptures speak of “rivers of water in a dry place.” Let us pray that we may be such men and women that we may bless our own households and then may be so located in Providence that, to the utmost of our capacity, we may be channels of blessing to an ever-widening circle of which we are the centers. Oh, for a share in the benediction which fell on Abraham, “In blessing I will bless you.” And again, “I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.” And yet again, “And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

We will now press more closely to the text and we notice in it, first, that

 there is joy in the families of the righteous. The text says so and experience and observation confirm it. And secondly, this joy should be expressed. “The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.” Then, thirdly, this joy concerns what the Lord has done. “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

I. First, there is JOY IN THE FAMILIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Thank God that is divinely true. Once, Paradise was man’s home and now, to the good man, his home is Paradise. I may say that, to some extent, this is in proportion to the salvation that is found in the family. If one or two persons are converted out of a large family, it is a thing for which to praise God, that He takes “one of a city and two of a family,” to bring them to Zion. Yet the joy will be rather a soft melody than an exulting harmony. If the wife shall be converted as well as the husband, what a comfort it is to them both! Now will two parts of the music be taken up and the hymn will be more sweetly sung. If two horses in a chariot pull together, how well it rolls along, but if one backs and the other pulls, there will be discomfort, if not mischief. I have seen two oxen in a yoke and I have marked how the true yoke-fellows seek to accommodate each other, so as to lie down together, rise together and move in step together. Where it is not so, the pain and inconvenience make it hard plowing.  
If the husband and the wife are both converted, a larger joy is yet within their reach, for they will begin to pray for their children. Those who are born to them will be their anxious care till they are also born unto God. They will have great delight when one of their dear ones says, “I have given my heart to Christ,” and is able to express his faith in Jesus and to give a reason for the hope that is in him. It will further fill their cup of pleasure when another comes, saying, “I would be numbered with Christ’s flock.” Many among us can say, “All my children are children of God—they go with me from my table to the Lord’s Table. I have a church in my house and all my household are in the Church.” Here is a picture, a pattern, a paragon, a paradise! We may say what a minister of Christ once said of his spiritual children, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth of God.” It is better, dear father, dear mother, that your boys and girls should he heirs of God than that you should be able to make them heirs of a vast estate! It is better that they should be good than great. Better that they should be gracious than famous.  
If they are married to Christ, you need not fret about finding them husbands—and if they serve the Lord, you need not worry about their businesses. While you live, they will be your comfort, and when you die, you will leave them in better hands than your own! Their future is well secured, since it is written, “Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.” I think it is generally true that the joy in a family is very much in proportion to the Grace which is in its members. Circumstances and peculiar trials may cause exceptions to the rule, but in the main, it will hold good. Seek, then, the salvation of the whole of your household!  
Here it would be a sad omission if I did not say that it is a greater joy when the saved circle includes not only the parents and the children, but the servants, also. A gracious, faithful servant is a great comfort. And to be surrounded by those who fear the Lord is one of the choicest blessings of this mortal life. We ought not to be content, so long as a single domestic in our house is unconverted. The nurse-maid, the girl who comes in for part of the day, the boot-cleaner and all who are employed occasionally for extra work should be thought of by the mistress and the fellow servants. We should pray that all who set their foot over our threshold may have a name and a place in the house of our God. Why should it not be? May we not often chide ourselves that we have been forgetful of those who minister to our comfort? Oh, that all who serve us may serve God! May all who wait at our table, eat bread in the Kingdom of our Father! And may all who dwell under our roof have a place in the many mansions above!  
Now we advance a step and remark that the joy which is here alluded to, is mainly spiritual. To fear God tends to make a man happy in every way—mentally, physically, socially, as well as spiritually. It is light to the eyes, music to the ears and honey to the mouth. It is universally a sweetener. The ordinary work of life runs easily when the wheels are oiled with Divine Grace. It should be an ambition that our house should be a temple, our meals sacraments, our garments vestments, ourselves priests unto God and our whole life a sacrifice to His praise. There are households where the Lord Jesus is the Master both of master and servants— and the Holy Spirit is the presiding Spirit in the whole economy of the house. Difficulties that disturb others never occur there, for love prevents them. All are gracious. All are anxious to be good, to do good and to get good. Consequently, jars and strifes are unknown. Little differences are never allowed to grow into disputes. Envying, bickering, clamor and evil speaking are put away. Though these spring up even among those who are of the same kin, yet gracious hearts will not tolerate their existence. Each pays due consideration to each—proper places are kept according to New Testament rule and the result is that the Angel of the Lord is in the house, the devil sees the mark upon the door and dares not enter—  
*“Blessed is the man that fear  
And delights in the Lord!  
Wealth, the wealth which truly cheer,  
God shall give him for reward.  
And his children,  
Shall be blest around his board.”*  
Yes, the chief joy in the tabernacles of the righteous is a spiritual one! A joy of the father because he is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. A joy of the mother because she, too, has had her heart opened, like Lydia, to hear and to receive the Word. A joy of the dear children as they offer their little prayers and as they talk of Jesus, whom their soul loves. I do not know that I ever have a greater joy than when, sometimes, I have to receive a whole family into the Church! Five came to see me at one time, from one house—quite a company of boys and girls. It is delightful to see our beloved offspring early in life giving their hearts to the Lord! Happy mothers, happy fathers, happy brothers, happy sisters where the Lord works so graciously! May you long continue to praise and bless His name for this singular blessing, if you are partakers in it! I know none of my father’s family, or of my own, who are unsaved and, therefore, I can lead you in the song!  
This kind of joy, while it is spiritual, is not dependent upon external circumstances. It hangs not on wealth or honor. The joy of the Lord will be found in the palace of a prince, if the Grace of God is there, but far more often it flourishes in humble cottages and lowly rooms where Christian men are dwelling who toil hard for a livelihood and often feel the pinch of poverty. They said of old that philosophers could be merry without music and I am sure that it is still truer of Christians that they can be happy in the Lord when temporal circumstances are against them. Our bells need no silken ropes to set them ringing, neither must they be hung in lofty towers! If our joy depended upon heaping together gold and silver, or upon the health and strength of all the members of our family, or upon our rank and pedigree, we might go to our beds weeping and awake in the morning blinded with tears. But as our joy springs from another well and the precious drops of it distil from a purer fountain, whose streams flow both in summer and winter, we can bless God for a constancy of satisfaction! Steady is that flame of joy which burns in the tabernacles of the righteous, for it is fed with holy oil. God grant that we may never dim its luster by family sins towards God, or by negligence in our duties to one another—but may the sacred lamp of holy joy continually shed its radiance upon us from generation to generation! May it be said of our habitation, “Jehovah Shammah”—“the Lord is there.”  
I heard of a wealthy man who had a large number of houses in various places. He owned a fine estate in the country, surrounding a magnificent mansion. He kept up an establishment at the West-End, a retreat by the seaside and a shooting-box in the Highlands—and he would often travel on the Continent. He wandered from house to house and was never known to stop more than a few weeks in any one residence. He told a friend that he was trying to find peace of mind in some one or other of his houses. What a vain quest! He might as soon have found the philosopher’s stone, or the universal solvent! I have known many persons who had only one room and that but poorly furnished, yet they found peace of mind there because they carried it about with them!  
Happy is the man who wears the emerald of peace upon his bosom, even though it is not set in gold. Blessed are they whose peace is like a river, having a source far away in the hills and a stream clear as crystal, continuous, ever-deepening, ever-widening, moving silently onward toward the ocean of boundless happiness! Yes, it is not where we are, but what we are. And it is not what we have, but where we have it—whether we have it in ourselves or in our God—that proves whether we are truly blessed. Peace is the best possession for an individual, the richest estate for a family and the fairest legacy for descendants. Where the salvation of our Lord Jesus comes, peace and joy are sure attendants! Therefore is it said in our text that “the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.” Made righteous in character, we may more than ever feel the temporary nature of our earthly sojourn and so may dwell rather in tabernacles than in mansions. But we are honored by the companionship of these two heavenly guests—salvation and joy—and, therefore, we envy no Caesar on the Palatine Mount, no monarch in his palace of marble!

Christian joy, whether in the individual or the family, can be abundantly justified. Believers can always give a reason for the joy which is in them. As Christian households, why should we not be glad in the Lord? If God is pleased with us, we may well be pleased with Him. If the Lord rejoices over us, ought we not to rejoice in that fact? God Himself calls us a happy people—let us not live as if we would falsify His Word. See, my Brothers and Sisters, whatever your temporal troubles may be, all things are working together for your good—may you not, therefore, rejoice evermore? Though every drug that is put into the mixture may be bitter, yet the whole potion is salutary. Though each event may seem to be against you, yet the whole course of Providence is for you in a Divinely wise and gracious manner. Nothing occurs in your family history, whether of birth or death, of coming or departure, of loss or of gain, of joy or of sorrow, of sickness or of health, but what shall produce, in the end, the highest good! Judge not each wheel, but watch the outcome of the whole machinery. To me, it is a happy thought that not a grain of dust in the March winds, nor a drop of rain in the April showers, is left to chance, but the hand of the Lord directs all! And therefore I am confident that neither in the little nor in the great shall anything really harm the man who dwells under the protection of the Most High.  
Beside this, we rejoice in forgiven sin. This is the first blessing of which David sings in the 103rd Psalm and it is the preparation for all the rest. If sin is pardoned, all bitterness is past, for this is the real wormwood and gall of life. Now that Goliath of Gath is smitten in the forehead, the rest of the Philistines are of small account. When sin is gone, the black cloud which threatened an eternal tempest is removed and the sun scatters the rest of the clouds as it disperses the morning mist. Even death has lost its dread when sin is gone—it is a bee without a sting and we look to find honey near it! If it comes into the house and takes away our dear ones, they are with Christ, which is far better! And when it bears us away, our death will be gain, for, “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” As the whole of life receives another color when sin is pardoned, so does Death, itself, look otherwise to the Believer in Jesus! That solemn business is so altered that we may even—  
*“Long for evening to undress,  
That we may rest with God.”*  
What is there on earth to trouble you who fear God? “Why,” you say, “we could tell you of a thousand trials!” Yes, but when you had done, I would tell you that there was no ground for being troubled about any one of them, for it is written, “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper.” “No good thing will he withheld from them that walk uprightly.” And again, “All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or to come; all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.” Therefore, let us take care that we are not as the Egyptians when they shivered in the darkness which might be felt, but rather as the people were in the days of Solomon, when they ate and drank and made merry, and peace was without end.  
I would ask any of you young people who are newly-married and just starting in life, how can you expect happiness unless you seek it in God? You have given your hearts to one another—oh, that you had given your hearts to Christ as well—for then you would be joined in One from whom you can never be separated! If you are one in Christ, you will have surer grounds of union than natural affection can afford. There will be a brief separation of the body when one of you is taken Home, but you will meet again and dwell forever in the same Heaven. Unions in the Lord are unions which have the blessing of the Lord. See to it that you begin as you mean to go on, namely, with that blessing which makes rich and brings no sorrow with it. If your home is to be happy, if the children that God may give you are to be your comfort and your delight, first let your own souls be right with God. If the Lord is the God of the parents, he will be the God of their seed. The God of Abraham will be the God of Isaac and He will be the God of Jacob, and He will be the God of Joseph, for He keeps His faithfulness from generation to generation of them that love Him. He does not cast off His people, nor their children, either. If you are an Ishmael, what will your children be? If you are far from God, how can you hope that your posterity will be near to Him?  
To return to my first point, the people of God are a happy people and their families are happy families. If I have any Christian person here who complains, “I am not happy at home,” I would like to inquire, “Is that your own fault, dear Friend?” No, do not be angry, I am bound to ask the question, for I often find that those who complain of unhappiness in their own homes are the main cause of that unhappiness! Most creatures see according to their nature and men often get into their bosoms what they measure out to others. When I meet a man who cries, “There is no love in the Church,” you may turn that expression into plain English and read it thus, “There is no love in me.” When a person says, “Everybody at my home is wrong except myself,” you feel sure that he has kept his eyes open to the faults of others, but has never really seen himself! If you wear colored spectacles, all things around you will be colored.  
“Alas,” cries another, “I am not happy, though I long to be so.” Do you know, dear Friend, the secret of obtaining happiness? The answer is very simple—do not attempt to make yourself happy, but endeavor to make others so. Be cheerful and cheer those about you. I bless God that I never fell into the delusion that there is virtue in a rueful countenance. Some may think it well to be “miserable sinners,” but surely it is better to be happy saints! Carry sunshine about with you in all ill-weather. Do not think that in godliness, drive will be equal to draw. A frown may benefit a few, a smile will influence more. A famous French statesman had such a dreadful countenance that a boy once asked him whether his face did not hurt him. Surely some very “proper” people might be asked the same question, for they habitually wear such gloom about them that one would think that all was night within! Let it not be so with us, but let the light of the love of God be round about our path causing flowers of cheerfulness to spring up on every side! There are enough weeping willows by all our streams—I would they were full of water-lilies. More Grace would enable us to glory more in the Lord and rejoice with more constant joy. So much for our first witness—there is joy in the families of the righteous.  
II. Secondly, THIS JOY SHOULD BE EXPRESSED—“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.”  
We should put a tongue in our joys and let them speak! The voice should be heard daily, from morn till eve, and till the silence of sleep steals over all. But it should never fail to sound forth in the daily gatherings for family prayer. It should be a happy occasion when we meet to read the Word of God and to pray together. It is well if we can also sing at such times. Matthew Henry says, concerning family prayer, “They that pray do well. They that pray and read the Scriptures do better. They that pray, read the Scriptures and sing a hymn, do best of all.” Herein he was wise and gracious as usual. I wish that his words received more attention. If you cannot compass the last of the three good things, mix the praise with your prayer by making it more full of joy and thankfulness than is usual. Never let the domestic devotion degenerate into a dull formality, but throw a hearty living delight into it, so that there shall be joy in drawing near unto the Lord and not a weariness. Where there is no family prayer, we cannot expect the children to grow up in the fear of the Lord—neither can the household look for happiness.  
Perhaps some of you have not begun family prayer, for you have only lately been converted. Commence it at once, if possible. Let not this day end without an attempt at it. But I hear a man say, “I never did pray aloud.” Then begin at once, my Brother. “But I am afraid.” Are you afraid of your wife? That assuredly is a great pity—I am very sorry for your manhood, for she is the last woman of whom you should be afraid! “Oh, but I should break down!” That might be no great calamity—a breakdown prayer is often the best form of supplication. May not this objection arise from pride? You do not like to pray before your family unless you can do it well and so receive their approbation. Shake off this spirit and think only of God, to whom you are to speak! Language will follow desire and before long you will have to be more afraid of your fluency than of your brevity. Only break the ice! Pray the Lord Jesus to cast out the dumb spirit and He will set you free from its power. If the husband will not lead the devotion, let the wife do it, but let no day pass without family prayer—a house without it is without a roof—a day without it is without a blessing!  
Do you say to me, “Alas, dear Sir, my husband is not converted”? Then, my dear Sister, endeavor to have prayer with the children and pray, yourself. I remember, when my father was absent preaching the Gospel, my mother always filled his place at the family altar, and in my own family, if I have been absent, and my dear wife has been ill, my sons, while yet boys, would not hesitate to read the Scriptures and pray. We could not have a house without prayer—that would be heathenish or atheistic!  
There will be frequent occasions for holy joy in all Christian families and these ought always to be used right heartily. Holy joy breeds no ill, however much we have of it. You can easily eat too much honey, but you can never enjoy too much delight in God. Birthdays and anniversaries of all sorts, with family meetings of various kinds, should find us setting life to music right heartily. Moreover, it would be well

 if our houses more generally resounded with song. It drives dull care away, it wards off evil thoughts, it tends to a general exultation, for the members of a household to be accustomed individually and collectively to sing. Of course, there must be common sense in this as in all other things, but as worldlings are able to sing songs, we might, with no more difficulty, sing Psalms. I have known some very happy people who were always humming Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. I knew a servant who would sing when washing and she said it made the work grow lighter. It is a capital thing to sing when you are at work. Keep on “tooting” a little, if you cannot sing—that is a word I got from an old Primitive Methodist. I used to meet him in the morning. He was toot—toot—toot—tooting as he went along the road. When he was at work in the field, it was just the same. I asked him what made him always sing. He replied, “Well, I don’t call it singing, it is only tooting—but it is singing to me, it is singing in my heart. I sing in this fashion because I feel so happy in the Lord. God has saved me and put me on the road to Heaven, why should I not sing?” What a noise we sometimes hear from the wicked when they are serving their god! They make night hideous with their songs, and shouts, and blasphemies! Then why should not we make a joyful noise unto the Lord our God? I recommend you to try, in your own houses, to literally Praise the Lord with your voices in holy song.  
If you really cannot sing at all, yet the voice of rejoicing and salvation may be in your tabernacles by a constant cheerfulness, bearing up under rain and poverty, losses and crosses. Do not be cast down, beloved child of God, or, if you are, chide yourself about it and say, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance.” Joy is the normal condition of a Christian. When he is what he should be, his heart rejoices in the Lord. Does not the Apostolic command run thus, “Rejoice in the Lord always”? If you ever get outside that word, “always,” then you may leave off rejoicing—but that you cannot do! Therefore obey Paul’s injunction, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Heap the joys, one on top of the other—joy and rejoice—and then rejoice yet again!—  
*“Why should the children of a King  
Go mourning all their days?”*  
Why should not the children of the King of Kings go rejoicing all their days and express their joy so that others shall know of it, too?  
Ah, dear Friends, if we were to go into some people’s houses where God is not known, we would hear a very different sound from the voice of rejoicing and salvation! There is the drunk’s horrible voice that grates upon the ear of her whom he promised to love and cherish, but whose life he makes unutterably miserable, while even the little children run upstairs to get out of the drinking father’s way! It is an awful thing when a house is like that and there is many a house of that kind. And in other places, where there is no drunkenness, there is many a man without the fear of God who comes in and blusters and bullies as if everybody had to be his slave. There is a woman, perhaps, who is a careless and dirty, making the home wretched through her gossip and idleness—and driving all idea of happiness far away. These things ought not to be and they must not be. God grant that your house may not be like that, but may whoever comes into your house be compelled to know that God is there— and to know it mainly by the fact that you are a happy, joyful, cheerful, thankful Christian, speaking well of God’s name and not ashamed in any company to avow that you are a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb! God give you more and more of this spirit in all your households! The whole Church shall be blessed when every family is thus made happy in the Lord and in His great salvation.  
III. I close by briefly noticing that this joy of holy households IS A JOY CONCERNING WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE.  
You see, dear Friends, that I have a text which is too large to be handled in one sermon, so we must have the remainder another day. But I must ask you to notice the song the holy households sing. It is this— “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” It is a threefold strain—we and our children have learned to bless the Triune God. “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end! Amen.”  
How we should joy in God, in our families, when we think of all that He has done in conquering sin and Satan, death and Hell! Christ has led captivity captive. Therefore let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. In that great victory of His upon the Cross, truly the right hand of the Lord was exalted, the right hand of Jehovah-Jesus did valiantly on our behalf—and for that we ought to forever be glad and to praise His name!  
Then let us think of what the Lord has done for each one of us individually. We were captives under the dominion of sin and Satan, but He brought us out with a strong hand and with a stretched-out arm, even as He delivered Israel from the Egyptians. Then our sins pursued us and we were ready to despair—but the Lord again worked our deliverance and plucked us from the hands of our mighty foes and set us gloriously at liberty! Truly, “the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”  
Since then, the Lord has helped us in Providence and delivered us from fierce temptations and made us to stand steadfastly when the adversary has thrust at us that we might fall. “The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” As I look back upon my own life, I never know where to begin in praising God and, when I begin, I am sure I do not know where to leave off. “O my Soul, you have trodden down strength!” In your case, also, dear Friend, the right hand of the Lord has been exalted in giving you strength in the midst of weakness and helping you in spite of your many falls and failures. Can not you, each one, in your separate sphere see something that the right hand of the Lord is doing for you? Do you not, therefore, think that your families ought to ring with joyous songs of thanksgiving?

When the work of the Lord is prospering, when you go home from a Church meeting after many have confessed their faith in Christ. When you see the pool of Baptism stirred by many who have come to be symbolically buried with Christ. When you see the Church breaking out on the right hand and on the left, new mission stations and Sunday schools being opened, and more workers busy for the Master, should not your hearts dance for joy as you sing, “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly”?

And when you see great sinners converted, when the drunk leaves his cups, when the swearer washes out his filthy mouth and sings the praises of God. When a hardened, irreligious, skeptical man bows like a child at Jesus’ feet, should not our families, as well as ourselves, be made acquainted with it, and should it not be a subject for joy at the family altar? I am sure that it should be! And when you hear the missionaries reporting their success. When the heathen turn to the Lord and the nations begin to receive the Light of Christ, should we not, then, have a high day of jubilee and say, “This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it”? I want our families to participate more and more in the joy of the great family of God till our little families melt into the one great family in Heaven and earth, till our separate tribes become part of the one great Israel of God, till we and all our kith and kin are one body in Christ and praise that Lord who is our glorious Head!

Ah, dear Friends, but we must each one begin by exercising personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Some who are here do not yet know the Lord. You cannot make other people happy while you are, yourself, without the true secret of happiness! Yet you wish to be a fountain of blessedness to others, do you not? You do not desire to do them harm, do you? Yet you good moral people who do not yield your hearts to God do a great deal of mischief if your conduct leads other people to say, “It is quite enough to be moral and upright—there is no need for us to go to Christ, to confess our sins and to receive from Him a new heart and a right spirit.” You make them talk thus by setting them such an evil example!

As for you who go in and out of the House of Prayer by the year together and scarcely ask a blessing upon your meals, much less call your children to your knee to tell them about Christ, remember that you will have to meet those children at the Day of Judgment. What will they say to you parents if you neglect their souls? You work very hard, perhaps, to earn their daily bread and to put clothes on their backs, and you love them very much, but that is a poor love which loves only the body and does not love the real child, the soul that is within! If, in the middle of the night, someone woke you up and said, “Your Johnny is not at home,” there would be a stir in the house pretty quickly! There would be no sleep for you if little Johnny was out in the cold. I wish that I could wake up some of you parents who are saved, but who have children who are not converted. Pray that they may be saved before they leave your roof!

The other day I saw a woman who came to join the Church and her great sorrow was that her children were all ungodly and she could not speak to them, now, as once she might have done when they were in her own house. She never sought their salvation, then, and that time was over, for they were men and women grown up and they paid but little respect to a mother’s word. I always like to hear what two children told me only a fortnight ago. One said, “I found peace at my mother’s knee,” and the next one said, “I found peace with God at my mother’s knee.” A mother’s knee is a charming place for a child to find the Savior—let your knees be thus consecrated till your children shall there draw near unto God! Will you not take them individually and pray with them, and speak to them about their souls? If you do, I think that I can venture to promise you that you shall succeed in almost every case!

Whenever I hear of the children of good people turning out badly, if ever I have had an opportunity of searching into the cause, there has generally been a good reason for it. I heard of a minister’s sons who were all bad fellows, but when I began to look into the life of the family, I wondered how that minister dared enter the pulpit at all, for his own character was not such as would be likely to lead his children to the Savior! It may not be so in every case, but I believe that where there is family prayer and a happy home, and a holy example, and much earnest supplication with and for the children, Solomon’s declaration is still true, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

O dear Friends, may my text come true to all of you! The Lord grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—145 (PART I), 112, 215.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

[This sermon was the second in a series of four delivered by Brother Spurgeon in connection with his 50th birthday in 1884. The first was #2538; the third was sermon #2237—Volume 38 and the fourth was sermon #2540. All four of these sermons can be read/download from http://www.spurgeongems.org free of charge.]

Sermon #3361 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S VALIANT RIGHT HAND  
NO. 3361

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 3, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE OPENING OF THE EAST LONDON TABERNACLE, ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1872.

**“The right hand of the Lord is exalted:  
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”  
Psalm 118:16.**

THIS verse might full often have leapt from the lips of Believers in the olden times. This verse might have constituted part of the Song of Moses at the Red Sea, for how wondrously did God there overthrow the host of His enemies, when, after dividing the sea, Egypt was swallowed up in it, God, Himself causing the last foe of Israel to be swept away by the mighty waters! “Sing unto the Lord,” they said, “for He has triumphed gloriously,” and by the shores of the Red Sea they knew that “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” It was so in the wilderness when Joshua fought with Amalek and Moses held up his hands in prayer. It was so when they smote Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. Are not these things written in the Books of the wars of the Lord, and is it not said, “The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name”? It was conspicuously so in the driving out of the Canaanites. When the people of Israel, untrained for war, marched into the land, they found that their enemies had chariots of iron and they were entrenched in cities that were walled up even unto Heaven—but yet all the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites could not stand against the twelve tribes of Israel! They fled before them like chaff before the wind! They were scattered like the clouds before the tempest! “Oh, praise you the Lord and magnify Him, for He cast out the heathen and He planted His people in their own land.” The right hand of the Lord was that day exalted, for His right hand does valiantly!

And was it not so throughout the period of the Judges? Time would fail us to tell you of Samson, of Gideon, of Barak and all those mighty men who were as weapons in the hands of Jehovah—javelins cast forth by Omnipotence! Truly in those days, also, the right hand of the Lord did valiantly! David, who penned this Psalm, knew this in his own experience, for he smote the Philistines hip and thigh with great slaughter. And long after David had slept with his fathers, others arose and God was with them—and the Lord did mighty deeds. Have you forgotten how the hosts of Sennacherib lay like the sere leaves of autumn when the breath of the archangel had blasted them? Right onward throughout the whole history of Israel, the foes of God had made headway for a while, for He put His hand, even His right hand, into His bosom. But when the Lord has risen and His people have chanted the solemn Psalm, “Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered,” then they that hated Him have fled before Him! Into smoke have they been consumed like the fat of rams! Into smoke have they been consumed away! “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

But from those triumphs of physical might over warlike powers we turn our eyes to another field of battle—a spiritual one! And God who was mighty with weapons of war, we find mighty with the sword of the Spirit and with the weapons of the Gospel! And we claim the verse which is now before us as a song of the New Testament as well as a chant of the Old! The right hand of the Lord is this day exalted and still it does valiantly!

We shall ask your attention not to a very lengthy sermon, but to these three points—The triumphs of the Lord Jesus; the triumphs of the Gospel in the Church; the triumphs of Grace in individual hearts. To all these, and I know not to which one more than another, the text is most appropriate.

I. CONCERNING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE LORD JESUS IT MAY BE SAID, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” He did not come as a Man of war, for He is the Prince of Peace. He came not here with sword, shield and buckler, but He came with a body fitted to suffer and with a heart that was made strong to endure. The Christ of God came in lowliness and in shame, to be despised and rejected of men, but for all that He fought great battles in the midst of His weakness and won for Himself wondrous spiritual victories. Observe, dear Friends, with holy adoration, how our Lord Jesus Christ met Satan in conflict, not once nor twice, but many times! In fact, throughout the Savior’s life, the prince of the powers of the air assailed our Master. That was a glorious duel which was fought in the wilderness and on the lofty mountain, from which those two contending spirits had a view of the whole world! And on the pinnacle of the Temple, too. Sharp was the sword of Diabolus when he sought to smite the Savior under the fifth rib and make a full end of His innocence. But oh, how glorious the strokes of the Lord, Himself, with the sword of the Spirit, when He said, “It is written,” and yet again, “It is written,” and yet again, “It is written,” and He chased the fiend away! And then triumphant angels came and ministered to the Conqueror amidst the loneliness of the desert. Oh, you Spirits, you might have sung that day, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” All through His life our Savior kept His vantage ground. The prince of this world assailed Him, but he made no dent upon His armor, much less wound upon His soul! He was tempted in all points—the darts flew so thick that they assailed Him from head to foot—but He was without a wound at the close of the conflict! He was tempted, but yet without sin. And you know how it came to the last tug of all in the Garden of Gethsemane. Oh, what a wrestling was that, when, as it were, the arch-fiend grappled close with Christ and gripped Him so that—

*“That desperate tug His soul might feel,  
Through bars of brass and triple steel.”*

It brought the bloody sweat down the Master’s face, but He did not relinquish His hold upon the foe and gave him such a fall that he never shall recover the defeat which he sustained amidst the olive trees of Gethsemane! And on the Cross, too, when he rallied his forces for the last time and assailed the Spirit of our Lord with all the malice of his infernal nature, there the great Michael, the true Archangel, set His foot upon the dragon’s head—and though His heel was wounded—yet He broke that head! And the strength of the power of evil is gone forever! Its monarchy is finally destroyed. “The right hand of the Lord,” though it was a pierced hand, “the right hand of the Lord,” though it had grasped a scepter of reed, “does valiantly”! “The right hand of the Lord is exalted.”

The same might be said, but we should go over the same ground, again, if we spoke of the conquests which our Lord achieved over sin in every shape and form. It mattered not how it approached Him—He repelled it! He overthrew it as far as He was personally concerned. And when the sins of His people were laid upon Him, oh, Brothers and Sisters, how dreadful was that hour, but how ought we to look back upon it with devout thankfulness! When the sins of His people came like an avalanche to crush Him, how gloriously did He sustain the load! With what wondrous power of angels did He suffer the wrath of God which was due for the sins of His people—

*“Bore all Incarnate God could bear,  
With strength enough, but none to spare.”*

And when He had made Atonement forever for all His people’s sins and brought in everlasting righteousness for all His chosen, and could say, “It is finished”— when He gave up the ghost—then truly the right hand of the Lord was exalted and the right hand of the Lord had done valiantly! Brothers and Sisters, the Lord Jesus has this day conquered all our sins! There is not a transgression left to accuse His people! There is no record against them in God’s book! He has perfected forever them that are set apart. The work is finished! Salvation is complete! The right hand of the Lord has done for us what we could not have done for ourselves! What the angels of Heaven would not have been so foolish as to have attempted, the Lord Jesus Christ has most surely completed for all Believers! Heaven rings this day with the joyful songs of His triumphant saints who tell how “the right hand of the Lord is exalted.”

Our precious Lord is to be praised in language like our text for having vanquished death as well as sin. Satan and sin He overthrew and virtually therein He conquered death. It did not seem as if He would vanquish death, my Brothers and Sisters, when He lay in the grave. The image of death was set as with a seal upon His brow! The Lord of Life and Immortality seemed, and was as really dead as any of the sons of Adam! The three days passed—the appointed time in which He should be, like Jonah, in the bowels of the earth. But on the third day He could not be held by the bonds of death. I think I see Him, like another Samson who had been bound with cords, awakening from His slumber like a strong man refreshed, and He snaps the bonds of death, for it was not possible that He could be held by them! Then the stone was rolled away from the door of the sepulcher and out He came, resplendent in the glory of His Resurrection body! From that moment death has been destroyed! Children of God shall pass through the grave, but they cannot be confined in it. “Oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, grave, where is your victory?” Christ has forever taken away the gates of the Gaza of the grave, carried them far away where Satan can never bring them back, and death cannot restore his stronghold. Glorify the ever-living Christ, for His right hand is exalted!

And the same was conspicuously true in the day when our Lord left this world and rose to the Father. Our imagination can hardly depict that scene, when they who received Him after the Apostles had lost sight of Him, brought His chariot from on high to bear Him to His Throne. Oh, what an ascent was that, when flashed the eternal coursers up the celestial hills. For He comes, mighty to save! He went forth to battle, but He comes back from conquest to wear His well-earned renown. Do you not see at His chariot wheels the bound monsters? They must be dragged to the very gates of Heaven and then hurled down again! He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men. Oh, in that day of our Lord’s ascending up on high, they who gazed upon the matchless spectacle of the returning King of kings must have said, if not in words, yet certainly in sense, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

In those victories, Beloved, you and I have a share. Satan was conquered for us! Sin was overcome for us! Death was bound for us— *“Hell and our sins obstruct our course,  
But Hell and sin are vanquished foes!  
Our Savior nailed them to His Cross,  
And sang the triumph when He rose.”*

Believe it and be glad of it! All your enemies are overcome! You still have to battle, but you fight with conquered foes. The dragon who is most dreadful to you carries a deadly wound about him. Your sins with which you have to contend from day to day are virtually slain. They have their death wound—they shall not be able to follow you into Heaven. Oh, rejoice in your Lord, conquer in His conquests, be victorious in His victory, overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and give Him all the glory of your triumph! Now, I pass on to note, in the second place, that our text is very applicable to—

II. THE PERPETUAL TRIUMPHS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.  
The Church began with feeble numbers, with small wealth. I might add, with comparatively little talent, but she was clothed with the Holy Spirit—she was, therefore, mighty! Let us just look at the history of the Church a minute or two, that our souls may be comforted with the prospect of the like victories in days to come. When first the Church was in the world like a new-born child, the dragon vomited forth torrents with the hope of drowning it. You know the rough weapons with which the world assailed the Church at first. The sword was unsheathed, prisons were put into use, the rack, unutterable torments, shame, reproach, every infernal art of persecution was pressed into the diabolical service to put down, if possible, the cause and Kingdom of Christ in the world. Now, only think for a minute what became of the continued attempts, the cruel attempts of the world against the Church, for the result conspicuously shows how the right hand of the Lord was exalted! The more they persecuted Israel in Egypt, the more they multiplied—and it was the same with the Church of God. They that were persecuted went everywhere preaching the Word. They might have tarried at home, perhaps, and been corn in the garner, but persecution broke down the door and they were thrown, like handfuls of wheat, broadcast over the nations— and everywhere the precious Seed sprang up! It was of no use killing the Christians—it was like the killing of the Hydra—the cutting off of one head made a hundred fresh ones spring up!  
Young men went to see the martyrdom of saints and as they saw their holy patience, they came to be Believers themselves, till dying Christians became the most powerful preachers of the Gospel and even the saints that believed were comforted by the sight of the death of the martyrs— they went to see how to die, they went to learn the way to give themselves up for Christ! The anvil never smites the hammer in return, but it breaks many hammers. It wears out the hammer. Here is the patience of the saints. God being in His Church, she has borne year after year, and God has forborne to avenge her, but she has triumphed! Her weak, feeble maidens and her illiterate men, her sons and her daughters who lifted not a hand in self-defense, have vanquished those that were armed to the teeth and had the power of Imperial Rome and of all empires at their back! “The right hand of the Lord,” amidst the hosts of martyrs who wear the ruby crown in Heaven today, “is exalted,” for “the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”  
Then, at the same time, the Church was sent into the world to combat with the superstitions which existed in that age and, Brothers and Sisters, the superstitions of ancient Rome were very attractive, very venerable. They had existed through long ages. They were interwoven with the daily life of the people. Poetry, art, philosophy, all lent their power to maintain the old heathenism with which the Christian Church came in contact. I have no doubt whatever that the Pontifex Maximus of the day, if he had been told that in Paul he saw a rival, teaching a religion which would break down all the old altars and the temples of Rome, would have ridiculed the statement. And yet it was so, for where are the gods of old Rome today? Who worships Jupiter today? Who bows before Saturn, father of the gods? Or who pays reverence to Venus or Diana? These have gone—and what has smitten them and broken them in pieces? The stone cut out of the mountain without hands has dashed them all in pieces and broken their power like potters’ vessels! And none shall set up these false gods again. Nor was it so in Rome, alone. In all countries, the Church of God has had a complete triumph. Weird superstitions woven with stories of magic which alarmed the multitudes have fled like the birds of night before the rising sun! No form of superstition which the enemy has been able to devise has had power to retain its hold where the Gospel has been fully preached. The superstition might seem to stand like the eternal hills, but Faith has said, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain,” and the mountain of superstition has melted away! “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”  
But, my Brothers and Sisters, the Church has been assailed by heresies within herself and if anything might have destroyed her, surely it would have been these! I will single out but one—the Arian heresy. You that are well read in Church History will know how very potent at one time the Arian heresy was in the ancient Church. The Divinity of our Lord became almost universally denied! He was a great man, a good man, perhaps the best of men, but they said that He was nothing more. It was a grand day when Athanasius declared that Christ was “very God of very God,” and, finding himself alone, yet said, “I, Athanasius, against the world.” It did seem an unequal combat, for there were monarchs on the side of the Arians—bishops and the power of the then Church, as well as the power of the world! But Arianism—where is it now? The pure faith of God has flung it off like drops of rain that are cast off from the housetops and remain not! There may be some sleeping in the dens and corners of the earth, to hide their ignoble heads, but the heresy is dead for any power that it has in the Christian Church. And so shall every heresy die. As the eternal God lives, nothing is immortal but the Truth of God—nothing is eternal but the Gospel! The right hand of the Lord fights not for a lie, but it is lifted up and His arm is made bare for the truth of His Son Jesus Christ! And all along through the pages of Church History this is true—that the right hand of the Lord is exalted, and does valiantly in overthrowing error!  
But the Church had to suffer from something which excelled heresy because it was the aggregation of heresy, superstition and apostasy. I mean the spread of Popery. In the Middle Ages the night was sevenfold. There was scarcely light enough for the anxious seeker to see his Lord! And men were crushed by the Inquisition, by the practice of priestly confession, by the domination of priests, bishops and popes. And if any man had then bewailed the absence of the light, as some few did, and an angel had said to him, “Courage, my son. The day shall come in which all this system shall lose its power and the old Gospel shall come back”—I can imagine I hear the weeper say, “If the Lord should open windows in Heaven, could such a thing be?” But such a thing was! God found the man and gave him a heart of iron and a brow of brass—and Martin Luther’s voice was heard ringing across these waters, saying, “Therefore is a man justified by faith, and not by the works of the Law.” And other voices took up that strain till in regions where that Truth of God was an utterly unknown thing, it became familiar to the peasant at the plow and humble men and women, hiding away from the powers that would have destroyed them, cheered one another with the gladness of that Gospel sound! Oh, you know, Beloved, how God smote the church of Rome in those days gone by, and as you read the story of the Reformation, you can say, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted.”  
Now, I shall not detain you with history. I shall bring you to today, for the truth of the olden times is fulfilled in your ears again this day. Wherever the Gospel is preached, the right hand of the Lord is exalted! We have seen it and, therefore, we speak what we know. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ is faithfully preached, no matter by whom—if it is the whole Gospel affectionately declared, prayed over, believingly delivered—it will always glorify God’s name! I want you to notice in these days how the Lord’s hand is exalted in some respects.  
First, in this respect—in awakening the attention of a negligent people to the Gospel. There is nothing in the world that makes so much stir as preaching Christ! You shall preach anything else you like and the people will sleep. But if you will preach Christ out and out simply, in plain Saxon, as Paul would have Him preached, not with wisdom of words, you shall find the people will come together! I know not why it is, but so it is, that even those who dislike the Gospel will come to hear it! And though sometimes they set their teeth together and curse the men that preach it, yet they come again—they cannot help it. A Gospel preacher has charms coming from his lips that bind themselves around men’s hearts. And he holds them captives, unwilling at first, and afterwards joyful captives, to the power of the Word He preaches! There should be little need of advertisements with a simple, plain, bold Gospel preacher. You shall put him down a back street, you shall give him a passage down a court, you shall then do nothing more for him but let him speak to a handful of people— and the first news you will hear of him is that he is eccentric, that he is extraordinary, that he is a fool, that he is a madman! This is always good news! There is a man of God somewhere about when we hear that noise! Straightway people want to hear this enthusiast, this Methodist, this Presbyterian—and they rush to listen—and then it is that there is power felt by the people! They do not know what it is, but there is a something in it which seems to grip their hearts and hold them! It is nothing other than this—that the Lord has said of Christ that if He is lifted up, He will draw all men to Him! And where Christ is lifted up, people will be drawn to hear. They must hear! We need not ask them to come—they must come!. Where His body is, there will the eagles be gathered together! Where the Savior Christ is proclaimed, there shall they come who need to feed upon a Savior! Does philosophy achieve such a triumph as this? You call it a poor triumph. So it may be in itself, but in its ulterior results it is a very great one. There are wise men on the earth that would give their eyes and ears if they could but get the people to listen to them—but where Christ is not preached, there are generally more spiders than there are human souls. Put Unitarianism in the pulpit and you shall soon find how the pews begin to multiply in emptiness! Little else comes of it. A gospel with no Gospel has great power of dispersion, but it has little power of attraction—but the Gospel of Jesus Christ soon draws a multitude together and, “the right hand of the Lord is exalted.”

But you will still say this is little, and I shall confess it is comparatively little, but mark you, if the Gospel is preached, it does not end in coming and going to hear it, for soon that Gospel comes like an eagle from afar and pounces down on men’s hearts and makes them a prey to its power! They that came to scoff, remain to pray! They that looked in from curiosity, remain to receive the Savior into their hearts! And those who came from enmity become converted into friends! Oh, how the right hand of the Lord was exalted in the days of Whitfield and Wesley! The stories of these two eminent men have been written lately by many loving pens— and I must confess I am always to read the narratives, however they may be written. Though I have read them many times, I can always read them again. Oh, it was wonderful when the whole land was asleep! The Church of England was asleep in the dark and the Dissenters were asleep in the light—but there suddenly arose up a man who dared to stand upon his father’s grave in the churchyard and to preach the Gospel! And then there came another, a twin seraph, with equal wings, who went into fields and began to proclaim the strange Doctrine of Faith as a saving Grace, the necessity of regeneration and the work of the Holy Spirit! Oh, those were brave days—the days of the early Methodists—when the time of the singing of birds was come and the land was full of the power of the Holy Spirit! And it is just so now. Anywhere where the Gospel is preached, and preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven, there are conversions, there are broken hearts, there are spirits held by Jesus’ love, there are glad ones consecrating themselves to the Redeemer’s service! “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”  
And we have seen the truth of this in some of the very darkest parts of London. What a wonderful instance of what God’s Grace can do can be seen by anyone who chooses to see it in such spots as Seven Dials, where God’s love has blessed the earnest Evangelist. Or in Golden Lane, where a dear Brother of our own, labors amidst the poverty and sin of the masses. Why, when I have gone there to see my Brothers and Sisters meet together, the poorest of the poor—fruit sellers, men that were drunks and blasphemers, women that were thieves and harlots—and have heard them sing the praises of Jesus and rejoice in His dear name, I have felt “the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” And so here and all around! I need not quote instances, for you know them better than I do, of how lions are turned into lambs and ravens into doves, and the most unlikely spots in East London—that were deserts, salt lands and not inhabited, that looked as if they were cursed of God—have been made to rejoice and blossom, as the rose, when the preacher of the Gospel has come into the place and His master with him! Oh, yes, “the right hand of the Lord is exalted.”  
But they say the Gospel has lost its power. I read the other day that some of us were the echoes of a dead Puritanism, that we were not abreast of the age and were preaching a faith that was practically dead! Sirs, they lie in their throats that say so, and some of them know it, for the Gospel is no more dead than they are, nor half as much! It lives and lives in all its energy! And they speak not the truth that dare to say it has lost its force. But it is unphilosophical! Hair-splitters do not care about it! Neological divines toss it out as a thing fit for old women! Glory be to God! If it suits old women, it will suit us and all kinds of people! But inasmuch as it is not philosophical according to their declaration, that word of God is fulfilled in our ears, “The foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”  
Then they turn round and say, “But look at those who preach it— uneducated men—men that are not of the higher classes of society, unskilled in the refinements, not able to always give the original word of the Scripture upon which they preach.” Yes, Sirs, and it would be a difficult task for any man to prove that the early triumphs of the Gospel owed a solitary jot to education and learning! In looking at the inscriptions in the catacombs a few days ago, when in Rome, I could not help the observation continually coming to my lips that the early Christians must all, or almost all of them, have been so illiterate as scarcely to have been able to write their own names, for the most common words that are upon the slabs of stone that face the graves of the early Christians are badly spelt—and there are Greek letters and Latin letters intermingled, showing that they hardly knew how to finish a word in one language, but must piece it out with another, not knowing completely either the one or the other! Yes, but it was because God had put His Truth into the mouth of babes and sucklings, and established strength, that when the Church had conquered by such humble instrumentalities, and the Truths of God had been mighty when preached by such simple men, the right hand of the Lord was exalted, for the right hand of the Lord had done it—not the wisdom, nor the craft, nor the energy of man! God’s arm was the more conspicuous because of the feebleness of the instrumentality! Much rather, then, will we glory in infirmities, because the power of God does rest upon us, for He it is that does valiantly! But now I must, in the third place, say a few words, and but a few, for time fails us, upon—  
III. THE TRIUMPHS OF GRACE IN INDIVIDUALS.  
Let us talk together. You remember, some of you who are this day converted, the time when first the Gospel had power over your soul. I remember how I fought against it. A mother’s tears would not move me, nor a father’s earnest rebukes. I heard the Gospel, sometimes, and I was a little affected by it, but I threw it off! But I shall never forget when it came with power to my soul. I had no shield that could keep off its darts—the arrows of God found a ready way into my conscience—and they seemed to drink my very blood! My wound rankled and was corrupt. My soul refused to be comforted. Then, as I used to go up to my little chamber and bow my knees in prayer and come down more wretched than when I entered it, when I would search the Word of God to find comfort, but could not find it—then it was that he who knew me might have said, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted in that young man, for he was proud and lofty, and self-righteous, but now he lies in the very dust, and wonders that God lets him live, and marvels that there should be a Gospel for him, and can only half believe it true that such a wretch as he should ever be saved.” Oh, I wish the Lord would come with power to some self-righteous ones that are here this afternoon! You are as good as your neighbors? Ah, suppose you are condemned with your neighbors, will that help you? To be lost in company is small benefit. Oh, but you have never done anybody any harm? No, except your God—and you have robbed Him of all the praise that was due to Him! And you have lived in this world just as you might have lived if there had been no God! Oh, proud Sinner, I cannot bring you down, but God can! Oh, for a blow from the mighty arm to level you and roll you, biting the dust in shame and self-abasement! Some of us know what that means. May you know it, too, and then you will say, though your heart is breaking as you say it, “The right hand of the Lord is exalted! He is good, but I am evil! He is great and I am nothing! He is infinitely holy, but I am shamefully impure! God be merciful to me a sinner! God save me for His Name’s sake.” It is in such a thing as this that the right hand of the Lord is exalted.  
But let me talk with you further, you that know the Lord. Beloved, do you remember when you sought to escape from the multitude of your sins? Do you recollect when they compassed you about like bees? You could not count your sins—you had forgotten them—they seemed dead and buried, but they all came to life, again, and they swarmed about you! They buzzed about you at your table. They stung you in your sleep, in your dreams. They stung you at your work. You had no peace because of your sins! And do you remember the place, the spot of ground, where you met with Jesus? Some of us recollect it to a yard. We looked to Him upon the Cross and the battle was over at once! One look to Jesus, Crucified, and the sins that compassed us about were destroyed in the name of the Lord—and the fires that threatened to devour us were quenched as a fire of thorns through the precious blood of Jesus! Do you remember it? Oh, let your soul go back to your spiritual birthday. Ring the bells of your heart, again, and hang out the streamers of your soul for that happy day when Jesus washed your sins away! Oh, Beloved, that day beyond all others, the right hand of the Lord was exalted, the right hand of the Lord did valiantly for you! It is a grand picture. I should like to see some artist attempt to sketch it, but he certainly must fail. I would like to hear some poet sing it, but I think that he could hardly reach the dignity of the argument. When Miriam and the daughters of Israel took their timbrels and went forth with the song and the dance to sing because Egypt had been destroyed, and Israel was free, do you know the note in that song that pleases me best of all is this, when they said, “The depths have covered them; there is not one of them left.” Why, they looked upon the Red Sea and could not see a trace of their foes! And I think I hear them singing it, “The depths have covered them; there is not one, not one,” and they answered each other, “Not one, not one, not one of them left.” And so when you and I looked to Christ and saw His atoning Sacrifice like a mighty sea roll over all our sins—in that blessed day our spirits sang, “The depths have covered them; there is not one, not one, not one of them left.” Every sin is gone, every transgression swallowed up in superabounding Grace. “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”

The same has been true, beloved Friends, in the many cases in which you and I have had to overcome our troubles. What sore afflictions have we passed through! Some to whom I speak, it may be, have had mountains of tribulation. Yes, Beloved, but when God has been with you, you have stepped from mountaintop to mountaintop without going down into the valley at all!  
And, beloved Friends, to close all, where there was much room for great enlargement, let me say, when you and I shall come to die—as soon, thank God, we shall, for it is a subject to be treated of with thankfulness—we shall find in our dying moments that “the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” I might almost say that I came here from the grave, for it is in truth but a day or so since I went to bury one of the holiest men I ever knew and, I may add, the happiest man I ever saw in all my life! He fell asleep at a good old age, but as I stood by his bedside often in his last illness, I envied him. Covered from head to foot, as he said, with the boils of Job and the sores of Lazarus in one—with all his bones aching as though they were out of joint, yet he said to me—“What a happy thing it is to be here.” And I said, “What a happy thing to be upon a dying bed?” “Yes,” he said, “for I am with God, and God is with me, and Christ is mine and I am His, and it is the happiest day I ever lived.” He had often said that in his lifetime, for I never knew him otherwise than rejoicing in his God. But I was glad to hear him, when his eyes were almost glazed with death, say, “It is the happiest day I ever lived.” And just before he died, instead of expressing any regrets at the pain he was feeling, or at his departure, he turned round and said to his dear ones around the bed, “You seem all changed to me from what you were. I love you, but I have reached a higher stage than things that are seen. I have seen the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off—and I have heard words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” And they said, “Can you not tell us something of what you have seen?” He said, “You must pardon me. I am forbidden to tell you. But henceforth, I have done with all things here below, and I am taken up with the joy and glory of my Lord.” “My bliss is so great,” he said, “it kills me! I cannot live much longer through the excess of joy I feel!” In a few short minutes he had closed his eyes and was with God.  
The Negro said of his minister, “Sir, he is dying full of life!” So have I seen them die, full of life—the best of life! And I have then thought, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” Fear not! The last conflict shall be the chief of your victories this side the river! The Lord bless you and make you a blessing. Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2540 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DECLARING THE WORKS OF THE LORD  
NO. 2540

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 24, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, **In connection with the dedication of the Jubilee House, which commemorated the completion of the beloved Pastor’s 50th year, June 19, 1884**.

**“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” Psalm 118:17.**

I could not deal with all the text on the last occasion, so I return to it. May the Holy Spirit bedew the Word afresh, and make it a joy to meditate thereon!

I. MANY ARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD. Are not all things His workmanship, from the heights of Heaven down to the deep places of the earth? From the remotest star blazing in magnificence of light, down to the gnat which dances in the beams of the evening’s sun, the Lord’s hand is seen everywhere! The Lord has made all things—Creation is the work of His fingers. He continues to work all things according to the good pleasure of His will. Some of these works are plain and manifest to all. If men have eyes to see, they have only to open them and they may behold God working all around them—above, beneath and everywhere! Others of His works are secret and not discerned by the organs of the body. These things are only to be fully perceived by faith as to their inner meaning, even when in their historical outcome they are seen of men. The great work of accomplished Redemption was seen by those who lived in our Lord’s day, in the offering of the great Sacrifice—yet they saw it not in truth. It is clearly seen by the eye of faith though centuries have rolled away, but the eye of sense saw it not, even when openly transacted. That other gracious work of God which is carried on within the soul is only to be known to the man who, himself, experiences it, though its results are manifest enough to others. So that there are works of God which will never be known to the mass of mankind except as His children testify concerning them. It should be with us a great objective of our existence to bear witness to these mysterious deeds of Grace! We ought to say, in the language of our Master, “To this end were we born, and for this cause came we into the world, that we should bear witness unto the Truth of God.” We are to live to declare these works of the Lord!

Let me very briefly recount certain of those works of God which we can declare. I think that this term may apply in a certain sense to all God’s works. For instance, I have said that Creation is open to every man’s observation and that he, if he will, may see that God is there. Yet very many men do not perceive God to be the Author of Nature. They do not will to perceive Him and it is for you and for me, therefore, whenever we talk about the wisdom which is to be seen in Creation, most distinctly to refer the things which exist to the hand of the Lord. A scientific man does great service when he sanctifies his science by pointing out the traces of the Divine handiwork. While others see only the Creation, he goes further and sees the Creator. You and I may not rank with the scientific, but that need not hinder us from bearing our testimony to the Lord’s working, for the naked eye suffices to cause wonder and adoration. When we gaze upon majestic scenery of mountain and sea, while others are entirely taken up with the beauty of the prospect, it is for us to say with Milton—

*“These are Your glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty! Yours this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; Yourself how wondrous then! Unspeakable, who sits above these heavens To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these Your lowest works; yet these declare Your goodness beyond thought and power Divine.”*

Thus we can preach the sermon of which the beautiful in Nature is the text! If men will not go “from Nature up to Nature’s God”—as they never will till they first come down from God to nature—we, at least, can point the way. We can say to them, “We cannot suffer you to look on all these majestic works without telling you Who it is that in wisdom has made them all.” Thus we shall, like the Psalmist, “declare the works of the Lord.”

Think, next, of the work of God in Providence. If men would but observe it, the hand of God is clearly to be seen in human history, both in the great records of nations and in the little stories of private lives. He who will watch for Providences need not be long without spying them out. We can see evidences of design as clearly in the deeds of human life as we can in the works of Nature, but, often, men will not see them. Consequently, if you do see them, my Brother, declare them! Make the ungodly man see the hand of God, or, if you cannot make him see it, at least let him know that you see it and that surely the hand of God is in all the workings of Providence. Have you not some personal story to tell of how the Lord has interposed for your help? I will not insult you with the question, for, if you have led a Christian life for years, you must have many, many such records concerning the loving kindness of the Lord laid up in store in your memory! Bring these out, let them not lie, as on a moldy shelf, but bring them out and tell to others what God has done for you in the ordering of the ordinary or extraordinary events of your life. “Declare the works of the Lord.”

Especially must you and I dwell emphatically and often upon the work of God in Redemption. Are we not too slow to talk about this marvel of all marvels—this greatest wonder of time and of eternity—that God came here in our flesh to suffer, bleed and die, that He might work out our redemption? All this is plainly written in the Word of God, but many men do not read the Bible. Then, let them see it and hear it! Be walking Bibles. Often tell “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” Do not wait till you can gather a great congregation—talk of it to your children, to your friends, to any with whom you are brought into contact by the Providence of God! “Declare the works of the Lord” which cluster around the Cross. Never angel had better news to bring than you have! Then play the angel whenever you can. Be the messenger of God in telling what He has done through the Redemption worked out by His only-begotten Son in His wondrous Sacrifice on Calvary.

And then, dear Friends, a further work of God which springs out of our redemption is that of regeneration—and we must also declare that. If men care little for the story of Creation, Providence, or Redemption, they care still less for the great mystery of Regeneration. They do not believe in it. Some of them, alas, hold it up to ridicule. Do not be ashamed to declare that work of the Lord and do it mainly by exhibiting the fruit of it in your life, but also by clearly narrating your own experience whenever you have a fitting opportunity. Oh, it is a wonderful thing to have been born twice, to have been “begotten, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is a thing to be spoken of humbly, but yet most boldly, that we have passed from death unto life, that we have been brought out of the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son! I think that man who was born blind, to whom our Lord Jesus afterwards gave sight, if he had lived for many years and had mixed much in society, would have been sure, somehow, to turn the conversation round so that he might tell how he was once blind, but was afterwards made to see. I should not wonder if, sometimes, his friends and acquaintances were caused to smile because of the oft-told tale. They would say, one to another, “Before the evening is over, we shall hear once more the story of the Prophet who anointed his eyes with the clay and then bade him go and wash, and so caused him to find his sight! It does not matter what the subject under discussion may be, he will turn it around, somehow, and drag in his narrative of the miracle which always ends with, ‘Whereas I was blind, now I see.’”

“Ah,” he would say, “you were speaking about light. Do you know there was a time when I did not know what light was? I had never seen a ray of it, but there came a wondrous miracle worker, called Jesus, who opened my eyes.” “You spoke about water, Sir, did you not? I remember the pool of Siloam, it was wonderful water to me, when I went, and washed and received my sight.” “No,” you say, “I was not talking about water, I was speaking about the earth.” And the man who had been blind says, “Oh, but I remember when I had clay put on my eyes, and yet that day, when I went and washed it off, was made the means of restoring me to sight!” I am sure that he would get that familiar story in somehow! Well, take care that you do the same, dear Brothers and Sisters. “Declare the works of the Lord,” and tell what He did for you when you were regenerated by the Holy Spirit!  
Since then, what a scene of wonders has opened up before our astonished gaze! I do not know which day of my life was most full of mercy since my spiritual birthday, but it does seem to me that the farther I go in the heavenly pilgrimage, the clearer is the light, the more charming the view, the sharper the lines of beauty, the more distinct the coloring and the brighter the approaching Glory. Yes, when God begins to work in us, there is no telling what is to come—it is always “better than before.” The light shines more and more unto the perfect day. Therefore, tell more as you learn more, and publish more as you experience more, and go on forever telling what never can be fully told. If you only told the blessings of the past, there would be a lifelong story for you to tell, but as each day seems to exceed its fellow, as the days of Grace so swiftly follow one another, let your testimony continually become more courageous, more clear, more frequent as you tell others what God has done for you. “Declare the works of the Lord.”

If I were to dwell at length upon these great subjects and then go on to mention everything that the Lord is doing for His Church and for the maintenance and spread of His eternal Truth, I would take up all the time with what I want to be only the preliminary to my discourse, so let us advance to my second point.

II. THESE WORKS OF THE LORD OUGHT TO BE DECLARED. There are always so many good and valid reasons for every one of God’s commands that, though it ought to be obeyed even if no reason is given, yet it should be obeyed the more quickly when there are so many reasons clearly apparent to us. Why, then, should we declare the works of the Lord?

I answer, first, for God’s Glory. This is man’s chief end, “to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” O saint, how can you glorify God better than by declaring His works? Will you begin, now, to adore the Lord? Suppose I were to lead you in an act of adoration, what would I say? How should I praise God, except by saying what God is, or what God does? We never bring anything to God from outside, but when we want to praise Him most, we fetch the jewels for His crown out of His own regalia. What would we say if we began to praise Him? “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” You see, it is all through the story of what He is and what He has done. This is the only way in which we can truly magnify the Lord, making Him great by mentioning the greatness which He already has! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, since I am sure you would wish to pay your revenue of praise to the great King of Kings, be sure that you “declare the works of the Lord.”

Do this, also, for the comfort of His people. What is there that can comfort God’s saints like telling them what the Lord has done—His love in times past, His love to others of His people, His love to you? You will comfort many despondent ones if you tell them how you were brought low and the Lord helped you. One of the readiest and surest ways of lighting a candle for a child of God in the dark is to relate your own experience of the goodness of the Lord. Therefore, then, as you want to comfort God’s people, be sure that you tell them what God has done for you.

Moreover, I know that you want to guide the anxious and how shall they be guided so well as by telling them what the Lord does? If you begin to tell them what they ought to do, you will only entangle them still more in the net, for what can these poor souls do to release themselves? Tell them what the Lord does for sinners—how He delivers them from the fowler’s snare. Tell them what a mighty arm He has to pluck them out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—and especially dwell upon the fact that He has brought you up out of that horrible pit and set your feet upon a Rock and established your goings. I feel sure that this personal testimony of yours will be one of the best means of leading poor troubled anxious ones to put their trust in God.

Moreover, dear Brothers and Sisters, tell what the Lord has done because it will be such a warning to the self-righteous. They think to go to Heaven as they are! They suppose themselves to be quite fit for the spiritual kingdom. Tell them that you have been born again. Declare to them what the Spirit of God worked in you when He made all things new and they will say to themselves, “We do not know anything about this matter, we never felt this change.” And, believe me, the narration of the Holy Spirit’s work in you and upon you will be more powerful to many of them than any words that I can put together! Your personal declaration of how the Lord takes away the heart of stone and gives the heart of flesh will induce many a man to say, “I am ignorant of all this, therefore what is to become of me?” And this anxiety will lead him to fly to Christ that he, also, may experience the new birth and himself be saved. Do not hesitate, then, to declare everywhere God’s working in you and for you, that others may be led to rejoice in the same blessings of His Grace.

Besides, it gladdens the Church of God when any are heard declaring the works of the Lord. Have you not, dear Friends, often been comforted when a Brother, home from a foreign land, where he has been a missionary, has told you how God has blessed him to some heathen tribe so that it has turned to Christ? Why, as you heard his story, you felt that you, also, would like to be missionaries! And when God blessed you, my dear Sister, in your Sunday school class, tell others about the sweet joy you have had in seeing His Spirit working with your girls or boys! For then they, also, will want to enter upon some holy service for the Master. When a Church gets dull and cold—and it is very apt to do so at times— and a kind of ignoble despondency steals over the servants of God, come and tell what the Lord did in the ages past! Tell of the glorious things which He did in our fathers’ days and in the old time before them! And then bring in a little of what you have, yourself, seen, how God has used you, a poor, weak, worthless instrument, to glorify Himself, for so you will put new life into these desponding ones and they will begin, again, to be of good courage.

“Well,” says one, “I have not said much about what God has done for me. It is not because I do not know Him, but I have not thought it necessary to tell it.” I think that no mercy of God ought to be stowed away in the cellar—everything that He does ought to be proclaimed! Last Tuesday I saw some 24 persons, whose names I was happy to give in to be proposed for Church membership, and I felt very happy and thankful, yet I said to myself as I went home, “I am not half as glad about these numerous conversions as I ought to be.” Time was when if anybody had said to me when I began to preach, “You will sometimes see 40 converts in a day. Sometimes you shall go week after week and see a score coming forward each week,” why, I should have said, “No, that is too much! I would die of joy if I ever saw that! Yet, by God’s Grace, I have seen it again and again! Do you not think that God blesses us more than we praise Him and that, sometimes, if our success becomes a little less than usual, He might say to us,” Well, I did use you, you know, yet you did not seem at all grateful for it. I did give you one soul and that soul was worth a thousand worlds, but you did not seem to think anything of it. I want you to appreciate the blessings I have given before I bestow any more upon you.” Why, Sirs, a man might give his eyes to win a single soul, and be perfectly satisfied to go into Heaven blind, with that one soul at his right hand! Better by far to enter into life blind, halt, maimed, with some companions won for Christ, than to live here with all one’s eyes and faculties, and be a barren soul and never bring a sinner to the Savior’s feet.

Do let us, then, bless the Lord, praise Him and declare His wondrous works. If you do, somebody will say that you are an egotist. Whenever anybody says that of me, I feel that it is so true that I do not get angry about it, because if I am not egotistical when I tell what the Lord has done for me, and by me, I daresay that I am about some other matter and, therefore, if I do not deserve the cut of the whip for that, I do for something else! So I take it as a rebuke that I deserve some way or other. But I am not speaking with egotism any the more for that. When the Lord does a good thing in me, or for me, or by me, I will tell of it and I encourage you to do the same. If somebody says, “He talks about himself,” answer, “Well, Paul was constantly doing the same thing.” One of the humblest men who ever lived yet he was continually talking about himself. You see, he knew more about himself than he did of anybody else—and he knew more about what God had done for him than of what God had done for Apollos or Cephas. And he was quite right in giving that kind of evidence which, in his own case, would be most powerful with those who had seen him and known him—and who understood in very deed and of a truth that God had worked great wonders in him and by him!

So, then, we may continue to say that there are good reasons for declaring the works of God.  
III. Now, thirdly, WHO OUGHT TO DECLARE THESE WORKS OF THE LORD?  
Well, first, let those declare them who know them. It is a wretched business to go up into a pulpit to declare God’s works and to pray God the Holy Spirit to help you—and then to put your hand into your pocket and pull out somebody else’s manuscript, which you have bought, to read it to the people! That borrowing or stealing of another man’s testimony is not what the Psalmist means and I do not see how God can be expected to bless it. But when a man speaks out of the fullness of his own heart of what he has, himself, tasted, handled and felt, then is there power in the testimony! You know how pleased those quacks who sell medicine are when they can get a testimonial from somebody who says that he has been cured by their remedies. Whether or not the most of those testimonials that are published are manufactured at home, I cannot tell, but if they do get a genuine recommendation from some living person, testifying to the beneficial effect of their medicine, how they try to make it known everywhere! Well, surely, there is common sense in that, for men are convinced by the testimony of others.  
It is for this reason that we who have experienced the working of God’s Grace should bear our own personal testimony concerning what He has done for our soul. There is no man who can speak with power about the Grace of God unless he has felt its influence in his own heart—and personal witness-bearing is always effective. “I preached,” said John Bunyan, “very often, like a man in chains to men in chains.” He heard his own fetters rattle while he talked to others about the bondage of sin—and I am sure that he must have spoken in a most convincing way—but when he regained his liberty, then he spoke of that emancipation like one who had not a fetter left upon him—and his hearers began to believe in such freedom as he described and to ask how they could obtain the same! If you have really tasted that the Lord is gracious and you declare to others what you have experienced of His graciousness, some, at least, among your hearers will believe you. There will be the accent of conviction about your message and even if they do not believe you, then so much the greater will be their sin in remaining in unbelief after they have had the honest and hearty witness of a true man whose word they dare not question!  
Think, dear Friends, if God does not get witnesses among those who have had their sins forgiven, from where are His witnesses to come? If you and I, who have had His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, do not praise Him, who will do so? Are you going to leave this work to worldlings? Then it never will be done! Are you going to hand over the testimony of the preciousness of Jesus to any chance body who may come along? Oh, let it not be so, but say within yourself, “Surely, the very stones would rise and speak if I remained silent! And the timber out of the wall might cry against me if I did not tell what the Lord has done for my soul.”  
I have thus tried to set before you the works of the Lord which are to be declared, the reasons why we should declare them and the persons who should be engaged in this blessed business of declaring the works of the Lord.  
IV. Now, in the fourth place, I want, with all my heart, to stir up your hearts and my own, also, to THE DUTY OF DECLARING GOD’S WORKS.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, as many of you as know the Lord, I pray you to declare His works and to be encouraged to do so because, first, it is a very simple duty. I wish that some preachers whom I know would think that it is so. When I have heard most elaborate discourses, or have known Brothers labor at their sermons day after day, I have wondered what their idea of true preaching could be! A minister said to me, some time ago, “I am disappointed with my people, for when I study very hard and prepare a sermon that takes me a whole fortnight to complete, they never seem to appreciate it. But the other day,” he said, “I had been so busy that I just went into the pulpit and talked upon a very simple theme concerning Jesus and His love—just such a sermon as I would deliver if I were suddenly called up from my bed and bid to preach in my shirt sleeves—and my people greatly enjoyed that simple kind of talk!” “Well then,” I replied, “if I were in your place, I would give them another discourse of the same sort! I should preach some more of those shirt-sleeve sermons, if they feed on them, and enjoy them.”  
The fact is, Brothers, it is possible to hammer a sermon so long as to get all the goodness out of it, just as men will beat a beefsteak till they have driven all the juice out of it and so give you nothing but a tough piece of leather! It is very possible to elaborate a sermon until you have worked all that is good out of it. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ meant that His ministers should go into the world and preach such masterly sermons that they should almost suffer from softening of the brain and I do not know what besides, because of the strain and struggle to get at what, according to my Bible, is very plain and simple? Is there not in all this a good deal of desire to shine and to seem to be somebody of importance? I believe it is so, but it ought not to be. The very philosophy of preaching is, to “declare the works of the Lord.” I do believe that, often, our simplest language is the best we can use. I have some very rare flowers in my conservatory, but I must confess that I like a primrose or even a daisy as well as any of them. When you are teaching, my dear Friends, pluck your illustrations from the fields and the hedge rows, and they will be far better than those which are brought from distant lands and die on the road.  
Is it not a very simple thing to tell what the Lord has done? Next time you try to preach a sermon, my young Friend, do just that—tell what the Lord Jesus Christ did and never mind how you do it! Tell as well as ever you can what Jesus Christ did, but do not think so much of how you tell it as of what you are to tell. Another time, make known what the Holy Spirit has done in you. “Why, I could tell that!” says one. Of course you could! And that is the very best kind of discourse. “Oh, but,” says another, “we must take time for study!” Certainly, study God’s Word with all your might, but there are parts of it which are so simple that they do not require any study—those parts which you, yourself, have tasted and handled and felt! The simpler and plainer your personal testimony concerning them is, the more likely will you be to do good by it. Come, then, Brothers, do not go sailing all over the seas to pick up some rarities to display in a great congregation, but when you get two or three people together, just tell them what you have experienced of the Grace of God in your own soul. You know that this is what I cannot tell. “What?” you ask, “is there something we know that you do not?” Yes, of course there is. I can tell what has been done in my own soul, but I cannot tell what has been done in yours. You have a portion of testimony for Christ which nobody but yourselves can give. This work of glorifying the Grace of God is a mosaic—I can put in my little pieces of stone or marble to form the pattern so far—but there is another part of that mosaic which nobody but yourselves can manufacture. It can be made out of the odds and ends of your spiritual experience, as you think them to be but insignificant and unimportant as they seem to be, they help to complete the whole design. Therefore, do not keep back that portion, I pray you, for you can now see what a simple duty it is for every child of God to declare the works of the Lord.  
Then notice what a very manifest duty it is that you should tell what God has done for you. Does this need any proof? Do you think that the Lord saved you that you might just be happy, keeping your joy within your own heart, ever feeding and fattening it? I do not think the Lord had such a narrow purpose as that in His mind when He saved you. Depend upon it, if God has given you a jewel to wear, it is that other eyes may be gladdened by the sight of it. He never lit the candle of His love for you to go and hide yourself in your room, shutting the door, and saying to yourself, “What a charming candle I have! What a beautiful light it gives! How I enjoy its brightness!” No, when the Lord gave you that candle, He intended it to give light to all in the house and He also meant that other candles might be lighted by it. “I had such a sweet experience the other day,” one says. Did you? Then, do you not think it was given to you because another person needed it as much as you did and that, therefore, you are to go and tell others of it? There are some hearers who, if we preach the Doctrines of Grace, sit and suck them in—but if we try to bring sinners to Christ, they say, “We did not get fed tonight.” And pray, who are you? Do you think that God sent His servant to do nothing but to feed you with a spoon? There are other things for the minister to do besides looking after you. I think, sometimes, it is our duty to leave the 99 and to go after the one that has gone astray—not so much to feed the people of God, as to search for such as are out of the way.  
And I notice that the people of God are generally best fed when that is the case and they feel the most joy when the preacher is seeking the salvation of sinners! If you, my Friends, are not happy when that is being done, there is something wrong with you—you had better ask the Great Physician to give you a dose of heavenly medicine to cure you of that sad disease! You are spiritually out of order, for he who is in a right condition towards Christ loves the souls of men and delights in that teaching which God is likely to bless to their conversion. It is, therefore, a manifest duty for us to tell to others what the Lord has done for us, that they, also, may come and drink of the river of the Water of Life and never thirst again.

Notice, also, that this is a very profitable duty. I hardly know of anything that is more useful to a Christian than to tell others what the Lord has done for him. There is a lad in a school and he is getting on very well and he can only have another year’s schooling. I have known this proposal made to his parents—let him become a kind of pupil-teacher—let him continue to learn and let him also begin to teach others. I was once in that condition, myself, and I can bear my testimony that I never learned so much, or learned so thoroughly, as when I had to teach others!  
When I first began to preach, this was my usual way of working. I was up in the morning early, praying and reading the Word. Then all day I was either teaching or studying hard, but at five o’clock every evening, except Saturday, I started out to preach what I had learned during the day! I used to tell the people, simply and earnestly, what I had first received into my own mind and heart—and I found that I derived greater benefit by proclaiming to others what I had learned than if I had kept it all to myself. I do not believe that you can thoroughly know the Doctrines of Grace till you begin to teach them to other people. You will soon find that they will not receive them, and so you will learn the doctrine of man’s natural depravity. You will speedily discover that your eloquence will not draw them to Christ and, in that way you will learn the Doctrine of Effectual Calling—that the Holy Spirit must, Himself, come and work upon them if they are to be saved! You will prove that some will reject Christ though you thought they were most likely to accept Him, and that others who you felt sure would refuse Him, will be the first to receive Him! There you have the great doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. You see, from your own observation, how the Lord has compassion upon whom He will have compassion and how He has mercy upon whom He will have mercy. You will never know the Truth of God in all its fullness till with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, you have attempted to inculcate it in the hearts of others. So it is a profitable duty to “declare the works of the Lord.”  
Moreover, it is a very pleasant duty to those who practice it. I can testify that it is one of the most delightful exercises in the world, to proclaim the loving kindness of the Lord. Old soldiers at Chelsea barracks, or old sailors at Greenwich, who could recollect Waterloo and Trafalgar, never tired of telling the familiar story. If you could have crept up behind them, when there were half-a-dozen people round, you would have found that they were talking about the battles they were in long years ago. They would be sure to linger over the details of their escapes and their heroic deeds, for it is a pleasure to old men thus to fight their battles over again! And, certainly, it must be a pleasure to Christians, who have experienced the wonderful working of God’s Grace, to tell out that far sweeter story! It does seem to me that this ought to be our constant delight. There should be no need for me to have to come here and urge you to this happy task. Why, Brothers and Sisters, you ought to be like the Israelites when the Lord turned, again, the captivity of Zion—with them you should cry, “The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad!” Tell it out among the heathen! Make it known unto the utmost ends of the earth that the Lord our God has given His own Son to die that we might be redeemed from wrath through Him. Be not silent, Beloved, but publish night and day the loving kindness of the Lord.  
This ought also to be a constant duty with all who love the Lord. When we have once told the story, we ought to feel bound to tell it again and again and again. It is the man who has never spoken for Christ who never does speak for Him. He who has been silent is all too apt to continue silent. It is good for you young people, when you are newlyconverted, to bear your testimony at the Church meeting. It often opens your mouths for Christ for the first time and I exhort you, when you begin in the workshop or the workroom as a believer in Jesus—when you begin Christian life anywhere—begin it not as if you were possessed of a deaf and dumb devil, but as if you first heard the voice of God and then speak out what He had said to you! I may be addressing some who are getting quite old who have not yet borne their testimony for Christ. O my dear Friends, wake up! You will have to be quick, or else your opportunity for testifying will be over. I could almost imagine that you would want to come back from Heaven to tell somebody about Jesus if you had not done it while you were here! Then do not think of going there till you have told all you can about your glorious Lord.  
“But I cannot,” says one. What can you not do? If you were to be cured of a dreadful disease, I am sure you would be able to tell somebody who the doctor was. And if, tonight, a thief were to break into your house and a policeman came and seized him, I am sure you would tell somebody tomorrow about what had occurred. “But,” you say, “I am such a poor one at talking.” I am not sorry to hear that—there are many who might be improved if they were like you in that respect. But, still, you can generally tell what happens and you can certainly tell what the Lord has done for you if you only seek the aid of the Holy Spirit. So, put away all that deadness and dullness of yours—rob God no longer of the Glory due unto His name, but tell what He has done for your soul.  
Do you ask, “Whom shall I tell?” Well, good man, tell your wife if you have never yet spoken to her about these things. Christian woman, do you enquire, “Whom shall I tell?” Why, tell your husband and your children! You cannot have a better congregation than your own family. Are you in a factory? Tell your work mates about Jesus Christ. There was a Brother, worshipping with us, who went into a certain workshop and he very soon bore his testimony in such a fashion that his master and the three other men in the place were all converted—and now they are all members of this Church—and their wives, too! When the husbands had heard the Truth of God, themselves, they wanted to go home that they might tell it to their wives, and so they have all been brought in! And, lately, there has been a new workman brought into the shop who did not love the things of God and could not stand religion, but God has blessed our Brother to him, also. Tell it out then, tell it out, you who have been lately converted! Do not hide your light under a bushel. Imitate Brother Gwillim over yonder, and others in this place who are always glad to have a word with the anxious, after the service is over. Speak up for your Lord whenever you have the opportunity!  
I believe that it is a great help in bringing people to decision when Mr. Moody asks those to stand up who wish to be prayed for. Anything that tends to separate you from the ungodly around you is good for you. Now, if you have given yourselves to Christ, tell it out, for, after our Lord takes you Home, you cannot go back to the world! When Caesar landed on a certain shore, he burned the boats behind him so that his men might know that they must conquer or perish. I advise you to do likewise—burn your boats by a clear and explicit declaration, “The Lord has worked this great change in me, by His Grace, and I am His servant henceforth and forever.”  
May God bless you, dear Friends, every one, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen

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[This sermon was the fourth in a series of four delivered by Brother Spurgeon in connection with his 50th birthday in 1884. The first was #2538; the second was sermon #2539 and the third was sermon #2237—Volume 38. All four of these sermons can be read/download from http://www.spurgeongems.org free of charge.]

Sermon #2237 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GRATITUDE FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE GRAVE  
NO. 2237

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 3, 1892, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

In connection with the dedication of the Jubilee House, which commemorated the fifth year of a life often threatened by grievous sickness.

**“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over unto death.” Psalm 118:17, 18.**

“This sermon begins a new volume—in fact, it commences Volume 38 of The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. I have, myself, selected it and prepared it for the press because it is most suitable as my own personal testimony at the present moment. The subject is even more my own, this day, than it was seven and a half years ago, for I have been in deeper waters and nearer to the mouth of the grave. With my whole soul I praise delivering Grace. To the Lord God, the God of Israel, I consecrate myself anew! For the Covenant of Grace, for the revelation of the Infallible Truth in the Bible, for the Atonement by blood and the immutable love of the ever blessed Three-in-One, I am a witness and more and more would I abide faithful to the Gospel of the Grace of God! I see, each day, more reasons for faith and fewer excuses for doubt. Those who will, may ship their anchors and be drifted about the current of the age, but I will sing, ‘My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise!”’

“The whole passage, Psalm 118:13-18, is inscribed upon a marble slab on the Jubilee House at the back of the Tabernacle and I am told that many went to read it while I lay in the greatest peril through sore sickness—and were comforted thereby. When the Lord permits me to return, I must raise yet another memorial to His praise.” [This quote is at the end of the sermon with this request from Brother Spurgeon, on page one— “Will the reader kindly note the remarks at the end of this sermon, before he reads the discourse.”—EOD]

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HOW very differently we view things at different times and in differing states of mind! Faith takes a bright and cheerful view of matters and speaks very confidently, “I shall not die, but live.” When we are slack as to our trust in God and give way to misgivings and doubts and fears, we sing in the minor key and say, “I shall die. I shall never live through this trouble. I shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy; and that day is hastening on. Hope is failing me. Bad times are at the door. I shall not live through this crisis.” Thus our tongues show the condition of our inner man. We talk according to our frames and feelings and would make others think that things are as we see them with our jaundiced eyes!

Is it not a pity that we give a tongue to our unbelief? Would it not be better to be dumb when we are doubtful? Muzzle that dog of unbelief! Dog, did I call him? He is a wolf—or should I call him a hound of Hell? His voice is that of Apollyon—it is full of blasphemy against God! Unbelieving utterances will do no good to yourself and will do harm to those who listen to your babblings. It would be wise to say, “If I should speak thus, I should offend against the generation of your children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.” Let us be dumb with silence when we cannot speak to the Glory of God!

But, oh, it is a blessed thing, when faith is reigning and powerful in our spirit, to let it have ample opportunity to proclaim the honors of His name! To give his heart a tongue is wise in man when his heart, itself, is wise. The more talk we get from the mouth of faith, the better—her lips drop sweet-smelling myrrh! A silent faith, if there is such a thing, robs others of benedictions and, at the same time, it does worse, for it robs God of His Glory. When we have a joyous faith in full operation, let us be communicative and let us openly and boldly say, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” I would follow my own advice and crave a patient hearing from you.

You know, perhaps, that this text was inscribed by Martin Luther upon his study wall, where he could always see it when at home. Many Reformers had been done to death—Huss, and others who preceded him, had been burnt at the stake. Luther was cheered by the firm conviction that he was perfectly safe until his work was done. In this full assurance he went bravely to meet his enemies at the Diet of Worms and, indeed, went courageously whenever duty called him. He felt that God had raised him up to declare the glorious doctrine of Justification by Faith and all the other Truths of God he believed to be the Gospel of God and, therefore, no wood could burn him and no sword could kill him till that work was done. Thus he bravely wrote out his belief and set it where many eyes would see it, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”

It was no idle boast, but a calm and true conclusion from his faith in God and fellowship with Him. May you and I, when we are tried, be able, through faith in God, to meet trouble with the same brave thoughts and speeches! We cannot show our courage unless we have difficulties and troubles. A man cannot become a veteran soldier if he never goes to battle. No man can get his sea legs if he lives always on land. Rejoice, therefore, in your tribulations, because they give you opportunities of exhibiting a believing confidence and, thereby, glorifying the name of the Most High. But take heed that you have faith, true faith in God—do not become a puppet of impressions—much less a slave of the judgments of others. To have David’s faith, you must be as David. No man may take up a confidence of his own making—it must be a real work of the Spirit and growth of Grace within—grasping with living tendrils the promise of the living God.  
I will read the passage from the Psalms over, again, and we will consider it, with God’s help. “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over to death.”

First, here is the Believer’s view of his afflictions. “The Lord has chastened me sorely.” Secondly, here is the Believer’s comfort under those afflictions. “He has given me over to death. I shall not die, but live.” And, thirdly, here is the Believer’s conduct after his afflictions and after his deliverance from them—“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”

I. At the outset, here is THE BELIEVER’S VIEW OF HIS AFFLICTIONS. “The Lord has chastened me sorely.”  
On the surface of the words we see the good man’s clear observation that his afflictions come from God. It is true he perceived the secondary hand, for he says, “You have thrust sorely at me that I might fall.” There was one at work who aimed to make him fall. His afflictions were the work of a cruel enemy. Yes, but that enemy’s assaults were being overruled by the Lord and were made to work for his good, so David, in the present verse, corrects himself by saying, “The Lord has chastened me sorely. My enemy struck at me and he might make me fall, but, in very truth, my gracious God was using him to chasten me that I might not fall. The enemy was moved by malice, but God was working by him in love to my soul. The second agent sought my ruin, but the Great First Cause worked my education and establishment.”  
It is well to have Grace enough to see that tribulation comes from God—He fills the bitter cup as well as the sweet goblet! Troubles do not spring out of the dust, neither does affliction grow up from the ground like hemlock from the furrows of the field, but the Lord, Himself, kindles the fiery furnace and sits as a Refiner at the door. Let us not dwell too much upon the part played by the devil, as though he were a coordinate power with God. He is a fallen creature and his very existence depends upon the will and permission of the Most High! His power is borrowed and can only be used as the Infinite Omnipotence of God permits. His wickedness is his own, but his existence is not self-derived. Blame the devil and blame all of his servants as much as you will, but still believe in the mysterious and consoling Truth of God that, in the truest sense, the Lord sends trials upon His saints.  
“Explain this statement,” you say. Oh, no—I am not called upon to explain it, but to believe it! A great many things, when they are said to be explained by modern thinkers, are merely explained away—and I have not yet begun to learn that wretched art. Remember how Peter told the Jews that He whom God, by His determinate counsel and foreknowledge decreed to die, even His Son, Jesus Christ, was, nevertheless, taken by them with wicked hands when they had crucified and slain Him? The death of Christ was predetermined in the counsel of God and yet it was, nonetheless, an atrocious crime on the part of ungodly men! The Omnipotence and Providence of God are to be believed, but man’s responsibility is not, therefore, to be questioned. Our afflictions may come distinctly from man, as the result of persecution or malice, and yet they may come with even greater certainty from the Lord and may be the necessary outcome of His special love to us.  
For this reason we may wisely moderate our anger against second causes. If you strike a dog with a stick, he will bite the stick. If he were more intelligent, he would snap at the person using the stick and, if that intelligence were governed by the spirit of obedience, he would yield to the blow and learn a lesson from it. Thus, when Shimei reviled David and Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said unto the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray you, and take off his head,” David meekly replied, “So let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Why have you done so?” A sight of God’s hand in a trial is the end of rebellion against it in the case of every good man! He says, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seems good to Him.”  
We may lie at His feet and cry, “Show me why You contend with me,” but, if the reason does not appear, we must bow in reverent submission and say with one of old, “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because You did it.” Job saw the Lord in his many tribulations and, therefore, praised Him, saying, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Surely there is nothing better for a man of God than to perceive that his smarts and sorrows come from his Father’s hand, for then he will say, “The will of the Lord be done.” This is the great point in the Believer’s view of his afflictions—“He makes sore and binds up: He wounds and His hands make whole.”  
Next, the Believer perceives that his trials come on as a chastening. “The Lord has chastened me sorely.” When a child is chastised, two things are clear—first, that there is something wrong in him, or that there is something deficient in him so that he needs to be corrected or instructed. And, secondly, it shows that his father has a tender care for his benefit and acts in loving wisdom towards him. This is certainly true if the father is an eminently kind and yet prudent parent. Children do not think that there can be any need for chastening them, but when years have matured their judgment, they will know better. “No chastening for the present seems to be joyous”—if it did seem joyous, it would not be chastening! The “need be” is not only that we have manifold trials, but that we are in heaviness through them. In the smart of the sorrow lies the blessing of the chastisement! God chastens us in the purest love because He sees that there is an absolute necessity for it—“for He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Our fathers, according to the flesh, too often corrected us according to their own pleasure—and yet we gave them reverence. But the Father of our spirits corrects us only of necessity—a necessity to which He is too wise to close His eyes. Shall we not, therefore, pay

 greater reverence to Him and bow before Him and live? When Hezekiah was recovered of his sickness, he wrote, “O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.” I find not that men live by carnal pleasure, nor that the life of the spirit is ever found in the wine vat or in the oil press. But I do find that life and health often come to saints through briny tears, through the bruising of the flesh and the oppression of the spirit. So have I found it and I bear my willing witness that sickness has brought me health, loss has conferred gain—and I doubt not that one day death will bring me fuller life!  
Be wise then, dear child of God, and look upon your present affliction as a chastening. “What son is he whom the father chastens not?” “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” There is not a more profitable instrument in all God’s house than the rod! No honey was sweeter than that which dropped from the end of Jonathan’s rod, but that is nothing compared to the sweetness of the consolation which comes through Jehovah’s rod! Our brightest joys are the birth of our bitterest griefs. When the woman has her travail pangs, joy comes to the house because a child is born—and sorrow is to us, also, full often, the moment of the birth of our Graces. A chastened spirit is a gracious spirit—and how shall we obtain it unless we are chastened? Like our Lord Jesus, we learn obedience by the things which we suffer! God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without sorrow—and He never will while the world stands! Let us, therefore, bless God for all His dealings and, in a filial spirit, confess, “You, Lord, have chastened me.”  
Consider the Psalmist’s view of his affliction a little more carefully. He noted that his trials were sore—he says, “The Lord has chastened me sorely.” Perhaps we are willing to admit in general that our trouble is of the Lord, but there is a soreness in it which we do not ascribe to Him, but to the malice of the enemy, or some other second cause. The false tongue is so ingenious in slander that it has touched the most tender part of our character and has cut us to the quick. Are we to believe that this is also, in some sense, of the Lord? Assuredly we are! If it is not of the Lord, then it is a matter for despair. If this evil comes apart from Divine permission, where are we? How can a trial be met which is independent of Divine rule and outside of the sacred zone of Providential government? It is hopeful when we find that all our ills lie within the fence of Omnipotent overruling! It is a comfort that we see a wall of fire round us—a circle so complete that even the devil, malicious as he is, cannot break through it to do more than the Lord allows!  
The camels are gone, the sheep, the oxen, the servants—all are destroyed—all this is most trying, but it is still true—“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” But, look, another messenger comes and cries, “There came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead.” Might not Job, then, have said, “This is a blow which I cannot bear; for it is evidently from the Prince of the power of the air”? No, but even after that, he said, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” When his wife said, “Curse God, and die,” he still blessed God and held his integrity. He told her that she spoke as one of the foolish speaks and then he wisely added, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” May we stand fast in patience as Job did, even when our troubles overflow!  
It is folly to imagine, as we have sometimes done, the we could bear anything except that which we are called upon to endure. We are like the young man who says he needs a job. What can you do? He can do anything! That man you never hire because you know that he can do nothing. So it is with us. If we say, “I could bear anything but this,” we prove our universal impatience! If we had the choice of our crosses, the one we would choose would turn out to be more inconvenient than that which God appoints for us, but we will have it that our present cross is unsuitable and specially galling. I would say to any who are of that mind, “If your burden does not fit your shoulder, bear it till it does.” Time will reconcile you to the yoke if Grace abides with you. It is not for us to choose our affliction—that remains with Him who chooses our inheritance for us! Read well this Word of God, “The Lord has hastened me sorely” and see the Lord’s hand in the soreness of your trial! Even while the wound is raw and the smart is fresh—be conscious that the Lord is near!  
Yet there is in the verse a, “but,” for the Psalmist perceives that his trial is limited—“but He has not given me over to death.” Certain of the buts in Scripture are among the choicest jewels we have! Before us is a, “but,” which shows that, however deep affliction may be, there is a bottom to the abyss. By God’s Grace there is a limit to the force, the sharpness, the duration and the number of our trials—  
*“If God appoints the number ten,  
They never can be eleven.”*  
Whenever the Lord mixes a potion for His people, He weighs each ingredient, measures the bitters, grain by grain, and allows not even a particle in excess to mingle in the draft! Like a careful dispenser, He will not pour out a drop too little or too much—  
*“To His Church, His joy and treasure,  
Every trial works for good—  
They are dealt in weight and measure,  
Yet how little understood—  
Not in anger,  
But from His dear Covenant love.”*  
Our Father’s anger with our sin will never blaze into wrath against us, though in mercy He will smite our sins. Remember, then, this gracious boundary. “The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over unto death.” We have never yet experienced a trouble which might not have been worse. One affliction kills another—the wind never blows east and west at the same time. When the Lord smites you with His left hand, He sustains you with His right hand. As tribulations abound, so do consolations abound through Christ Jesus. The whole band of troubles never comes forth at once. Everything painful is graded and proportioned to the man and his strength—and the objective for which it is sent. With the trial, the Lord makes the way of escape that we may be able to bear it. Faith can see an end and limit where Nature’s dim eyes see endless confusion. Where the carnal sense—  
*“Sees every day new straits attend,  
And wonders where the scene will end,”*  
Faith looks over the intervening space and comforts herself with that which is yet to come. Faith sings pleasant songs when she foots it over weary roads—  
*“The road may be rough, but it cannot be long, So let’s smooth it with hope and cheer it with song.”*The Lord keep your faith alive, my Brothers and Sisters, and then whatever trials surge around you, you will sit on the Rock of Ages, above the waves, and joyfully sing praises unto your Divine Deliverer! Oh, how sweet to say, as I do now, “The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over unto death!”  
II. This brings me, secondly, to consider THE BELIEVER’S COMFORT UNDER HIS AFFLICTIONS. The Believer’s comfort under his afflictions is this—“I shall not die, but live.”  
Occasionally this comes in the form of a presentiment. I do not think that I am superstitious. I fancy that I am pretty clear of that vice, yet I have had presentiments concerning things to come or not to come. And, moreover, I have met with so many Christians who, in the time of trouble, have received amazing warnings, or sweet assurances of coming deliverance, that I am bound to believe that the Lord does, sometimes, whisper to the heart of His children and assure them in trial that they shall not be crushed—and in sickness that they shall not die.  
How do you understand the story of John Wycliffe, at Lutterworth, in any other way than this? He had been speaking against the monks and various abuses of the church. He was the first man known to history that preached the Gospel in England during the Popish ages—we know him as the Morning Star of the Reformation! He was a man so great that, if he had possessed a printing press, we might never have needed a Luther—for he had an even clearer light than that great Reformer! He lacked the means of spreading his doctrine which the art of printing supplied. He did much—he prepared everything for Luther’s hands—and Luther was but the proclaimer of Wycliffe’s doctrine! Wycliffe was ill—very ill—and the friars came round him like crows round a dying sheep. They professed to be full of tender pity, but they were right glad that their enemy was going to die! So they said to him, “Will you not repent? Before we can give you viaticum—the last oiling before you die—would it not be well to retract the hard things which you have said against the zealous friars and His Holiness of Rome? We are eager to forget the past and give you the last sacrament in peace.”  
Wycliffe begged an attendant to help him sit up and then he cried with all his strength, “I shall not die, but live, to declare the works of the Lord and to expose the wickedness of the friars.” He did not die, either—Death, himself, could not have killed him, then, for he had work to do and the Lord made him immortal until it was done! How could Wycliffe know that he spoke truly? Certainly he was free from all foolhardy bragging, but there was upon his mind a foreshadowing of future work that he had to do—and he felt that he could not die until it was accomplished!  
Now, do not be making up presentiments about all sorts of things because I have said that sometimes the Lord grants them to His saints. This would be a mischievous piece of absurdity! I remember a young woman who lived not far from here, who had a presentiment that she would die. I do not think that there was really much the matter with her, but she refused to eat and was likely to be starved. I went to see her and she told me that she had a presentiment that she would die and, therefore, she would not waste food by eating it. She spoke to me very solemnly about this presentiment and I replied, “I believe there may be such things.” Yes—she was sure I was on her side! Then I went on to say, “I once had a presentiment that I was a donkey and it turned out true in my case. And now I have much the same presentiment about you!”

This surprised her and I asked her friends to bring her food. She said she would not eat it and then I told her that if she was resolved on suicide, I would mention it at Church Meeting that evening and put her out of the Church, since we could not have suicides in our membership. She could not bear to be put out of the Church and began to eat—and it turned out that my presentiment about her was correct—she had been foolish and she had the good sense to see that it was so. I felt bound to tell you this story, lest you should fancy that I would support you in sentimental nonsense. While there are so many stupid people in the world, we have no need to give cautions where the wise do not need them! Forecasts of good from the Lord may come to those who are sorely sick—and when they do, they help them to recover. We are of good courage when an inward confidence enables us to say, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”  
This, however, I only mention by the way. When a Believer is in trouble, he derives great comfort from his reliance upon the compassion of God. The Lord scourges His children, but He does not slay them. The Believer says, “My Father may make me smart with the blow of a cruel one, but He will do me no real harm, nor allow anyone else to injure me. He will not lay upon me more than is right, nor above what I am able to bear. He will stay His hand when He sees that I have no strength left. Moreover, I know that even when He brings me very low, still underneath me are the everlasting arms. If the Lord kills, it is only to make alive—if He wounds, it is that He may heal. I am sure of that.”  
O Believer, never let anything drive you away from this confidence, for it has sure truth for its foundation! The Lord is good and His mercy endures forever. It is not killing, but curing, that God means when He takes the sharp lancet in His hands. The nauseous medicine which makes the heart sick, works for the cure of a worse sickness. “His compassions fail not.” He may often put His hand into the bitter box, but He has sweet cordials ready to take the taste away. For a small moment has He forsaken us, but with great mercies will He return to us. You have an effectual comfort if your faith can keep its hold upon the blessed fact of the Lord’s fatherly compassion.  
Next, faith comforts the tried child of God by assuring him of the forgiveness of his sin and his security from punishment. Please notice the very distant difference between chastisement and punishment. I do not say between the meaning of the words, but between the two things which I just now would indicate by those terms. Here is a boy who has committed a theft. He is brought before the magistrate that he may be punished. Punitive justice will be executed upon him by imprisonment or by a birch rod. Another boy has also stolen—stolen from his father—and he is brought before his father—not to be punished as a law-breaker, but to be chastised. There is a great difference between the punishment awarded by justice and the chastisement appointed by love! They may be alike in painfulness, but how different in meaning!  
The father does not give his child what he would deserve if it were a punishment according to the law, but what he thinks will cure him of the wrong-doing by making him feel that his sin brings sorrow. The magistrate, although he desires the good of the offender, has mainly to consider the law in its bearings upon the whole mass of the population and, therefore, he punishes, as a matter of justice, that which wrongs the commonwealth. But the parent acts on other principles. “The Lord has chastened me sorely” and, in that He has added a fatherly part, “but He has not given me over unto death,” which would have been my lot if He had dealt with me as a judge! My heart trembles at His sword and cries, “Enter not into judgment with Your servant, O Lord: for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.”  
The sentence of Justice has been fulfilled upon our Lord and our comfort is that now there is nothing punitive in all our troubles. “He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities”— nor will He do so, for He has already laid our sins upon Christ—and Christ has vindicated the Law by bearing its penalty so that nothing more in the way of penalty is demanded by the moral government of God. That which we receive from the rod of the Lord bears the blessed aspect of chastening from a father’s hand—and this is a gladsome fact which makes even the sharpest smart to be profitable. “Surely the bitterness of death is past” when, in the case of the Believer, even death has ceased to be the penalty of sin and is changed into a sweet falling asleep upon the bosom of the Well-Beloved and to wake up in His likeness! Every other affliction is changed in the same fashion. Our wasps have become bees—their sting is not the prominent thought, but the honey which they lay up in store. “All things work together for good to them that love God,” and chastisement is chief among those, “all things.” What a well of comforting thought is here!  
Furthermore, it is a great blessing to a child of God to feel a full assurance that he has eternal life in Christ Jesus. “The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over unto death.” Notice the words, “Given me over.” It is the most awful thing out of Hell to be given over by God! I fear that there are some such persons. Does not the Psalmist refer to such when he says, “They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish”? While God’s own people are chastened every morning and plagued all day long, the ungodly prosper in the world and increase in riches! Of His chosen, the Lord says, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”  
But those who are not the Lord’s are left unchastened because the Lord has said of them, “Let them alone, they are given unto idols.” They are allowed their transient mirth—let them make the most they can of it, for their end will be desolation. Unbroken prosperity and undisturbed health may be signs of being “given over unto death”—and they are in such cases where sin is committed without pangs of conscience, or apprehensions of judgment. Such freedom from fear may be maintained even in death— “There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.” All goes quietly with them—“Like sheep they are laid in the grave.” But, “in Hell they lift up their eyes, being in torments.” To be given over unto death is often followed by callousness, presumption and bravado—but it is a dreadful doom—the direst sentence from the Throne of Judgment as to this life! But you, dear child of God, have this comfort, He has not given you over—He is thinking about  
you! Men do not prune the vine they mean to uproot, nor thresh out the weeds which they mean to burn! He who is chastened is not given over to destruction.  
Years ago, I was taken very ill, in Marseilles, while attempting to come home to England. As I lay in bed, it seemed as if the cruel mistral wind was driving through my bones and breaking them with agony. I ordered a fire to be kindled, but when I saw the man begin to light it with a bundle of little branches, I cried out to him, “Pray let me look at that.” I found that he was using the dry pruning of the vine and my tears were in my eyes as I remembered the words—“Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” Comfort followed, for I thought, “I am not feeling, like those dried-up shoots, but I am the bleeding vine which is sharply cut with the pruning knife. I feel the keen blade in every part of me.” Then I could say, “The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over.” What joy lies in this, “He has not given me over!” As long as the father chastens his boy, he has hope for him. If he ceased to do so altogether, we might fear that he thought him too bad to be reclaimed. Be glad, then, dear child of God, that since the Lord chastens you sorely, He has not erased your name from His heart or His hands, nor yielded you up to your enemy’s power!  
Another meaning may be found in this text, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sorely: but He has not given me over unto death.” We are comforted by reliance upon God’s power for success in our lifework. The critics said—and I must quote this because this sermon is very much a personal one—the critics said, when the lad commenced his preaching, that it was a nine days’ wonder and would soon come to an end. When the people joined the Church in great numbers, they were “a parcel of boys and girls.” Many of those “boys and girls” are here, tonight, faithful to God unto this hour! Then there came upon me a heavy, heavy stroke—a sore chastening, which those of us who were present would never forget if we live for a century! And we seemed to be made the reproach of all men, through an accident which we could not have foreseen or prevented.  
But still, the testimony for God in this place, by the same voice, has not ceased, nor lost its power. Still the people throng to hear the Gospel after these 30 years and more! And still the Doctrines of Grace are to the front, not-withstanding the opposition! In the darkest hour of my ministry I might have declared, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” If you have been set on fire by a Divine Truth of God, the world cannot put an extinguisher upon you. That candle which God has lighted, the devils of Hell cannot blow out! If you are commissioned of God to do a good work, give your whole heart to it—trust in the Lord and you will not fail! I bear my joyful witness to the power of God to work mightily by the most insignificant of instruments—  
*“The feeblest saint shall win the day,  
Though death and Hell obstruct the way.”*  
Once more, though we may die,

 we are sustained by the expectation of immortality. When we gather up our feet in the last bed, we may utter this text in a full and sweet sense, “I shall not die, but live.” When Wycliffe died as to his body, the real Wycliffe did not die. Some of his books were carried to Bohemia—and John Huss learned the Gospel from them and began to preach. They burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, but Huss foretold, as he died, that another would arise after him whom they should not be able to put down! And in due time he more than lived, again, in Luther! Is Luther dead? Is Calvin dead today? That last man the moderns have tried to bury in a dunghill of misrepresentation, but he lives—and will live—and the Truths of God that he taught will survive all the calumniators that have sought to poison it!  
Die? Often the death of a man is a kind of new birth to him—when he, himself, is gone physically—he spiritually survives and from the grave there shoots up a tree of life whose leaves heal nations! O worker for God, death cannot touch your sacred mission! Be content to die if the Truth shall live better because you die! Be content to die because death may be to you, enlargement of your influence! Good men die as dies seed corn which thereby abides not alone. When saints are apparently laid in the earth, they quit the earth and rise and mount to Heaven’s gate and enter into immortality! No, when the sepulcher receives this mortal frame, we shall not die, but live! Then shall we come to our true stature and beauty, put on our royal robes, our glorious Sabbath dress!  
III. So I finish with just two or three words on THE BELIEVER’S CONDUCT AFTER TROUBLE AND DELIVERANCE. “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”  
Here is declaration. If we had no troubles, we would all have less to declare. A person who has no experience of tribulation, what great deliverance has he to speak of? Such persons despise the afflicted and suspect the character of the choicest of men for lack of power to understand them. What does the man know about the sea who has only walked on the beach? Get with an old sailor who has been, a dozen times, around the world, and often wrecked, and he will interest you. So the much-tried Christian has great wonders to declare—and these are chiefly the works of the Lord for, “they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.” Tried Christians see how God sustains in trouble and how He delivers out of it—and they declare His works openly—they cannot help doing so. They are so interested in what God has done that they grow enthusiastic about it—and if they held their peace, the stones would cry out!  
If you read the chapter further down, you will find that they not only give forth a declaration, but they offer adoration. They are so charmed with what God has done for them that they laud and magnify the name of the Lord, saying, “I will praise You: for You have heard me, and have become my salvation.” The saints of God, when they are rescued from their sorrows, are sure to sing, “My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior.”  
This done, they make a further dedication of themselves to their delivering God. As the Psalm puts it, “God is the Lord, which has showed us light.” It was very dark! It was very, very dark! We could not see our hand, much less the hand of God! We were frozen with fear. We thought we were, as dead men, laid out for burial, when suddenly the Lord’s face shown in upon us and all darkness was gone! And we leaped into joyful security, crying, “God is the Lord, which has showed us light.” We were convinced that it was none other than the true God who had removed the midnight gloom. Doubts, infidelities, agnosticisms—they were impossible! We said, “God is the Lord, which has showed us light.” In the fourth watch of the night, in the prison where the cold stone shut us in, where the darkness had never known a candle, there a light shone round about us and an angel smote us on the side and bade us put on our sandals, and gird ourselves, and follow him. We obeyed the word, and our chains fell off; and when we came to the iron gate which had always been our horror, it opened of its own accord, and we went out into the streets of the city, and we scarcely felt that it could be true, but thought we saw a vision. But when we had considered the thing, and found it was even ourselves, and ourselves set in a large place at perfect liberty, then we said, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”  
God has showed us light and we will live to Him forever and forever. Oh, you tried Believers, who have, nevertheless, not been given over unto death, who can say, tonight, “I shall not die, but live,” present yourselves anew unto your delivering Lord as living sacrifices through Jesus Christ your Lord! Amen.

**Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Psalm 18.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—708, 73 (PART II), 710.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #1420 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HEADSTONE OF THE CORNER  
NO. 1420

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 23, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice  
and be glad in it, Save now, I beseech You, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech You, send now prosperity.”  
Psalm 118:22-25.**

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to fix with certainty the occasion which first suggested this Psalm. It has even been thought to be purely prophetic and rather foretelling history than narrating it. I rather incline to the opinion that some Israelite hero, chosen of God to high office in the midst of his people, had been rejected by the rulers, had passed through many struggles—some of them of the most violent kind—and at last, notwithstanding the rejection of his people and their leaders, had attained to a prominent position, no, to a chief place in the midst of the nation!

The Psalm is applicable to Christ and to Him it is referred in the New Testament several times, but probably from the human point of view it was at first intended to celebrate the victory of some chosen man of God who, despite his Divine election, had been rejected by his countrymen. Providence conducted him to a crowning success and he magnified the Lord for it. In some way or other, a stone has come to be connected with several persons whose history was of this character.

Remember Jacob. He flees from his father’s house because Esau threatens to kill him. He appears to be the rejected member of Isaac’s family by whom the house would never be built. At the end of a day’s journey he lies down with a stone for his pillow and, as he sweetly slumbers, he sees Heaven open. He beholds the mystic ladder and rises, assured of the love of the Almighty God! By faith thus infused into his soul, he becomes strong for his future life and so lives that now the house of Abraham and Isaac stands represented in the seed of Jacob, alone. And Esau, with all his dukes, has utterly passed away.

The next occurrence of the stone happens in reference to Joseph, of whom the dying Jacob said, “From thence is the shepherd the stone of Israel.” He was separated from his brothers by their envy and grievously wounded by their malice. They said, “Behold, this dreamer comes,” and they sold him for a slave into the stranger’s land. From the dungeons of Egypt he climbed to the throne and became the cornerstone of Israel’s house! On his bosom his aged father could lay his head and dream as he did at Bethel! And by his power and wisdom, the shepherd family was happily built up. Then came David, whom his elder brothers despised and even his father passed him over, until the Prophet of God asked for him, that he might be anointed with oil!  
Out of his hand went that stone of Israel which laid low the pride of

Philistia! Goliath must bite the ground when the stone of Israel flies from the hand of Israel’s shepherd who was destined to be her king! He was rejected and hated by Saul so that he wandered about in the wilderness, hiding in caves and rocks until the hour came when he was called to the throne. Then the stone which the builders refused became the headstone of the corner and he and his people confessed that it was the Lord’s doing and it was marvelous in their eyes! Be not afraid, O you persecuted ones, for you shall fulfill your destiny!

It has happened again and again in history that those who have been destined to do great things for the Lord have, first of all, been compelled to pass through a trying ordeal of misunderstanding and rejection! Such history repeats itself and it may do so in your instance. The speckled bird of the family, the one least beloved, often rises to take the most prominent place. Jephthah was driven out from his father’s family and yet in their distress his brethren were glad enough to make him their champion and accept him as their head. Bow your head in patience, young man, and bear whatever God or His enemies may lay upon you, for assuredly as the Lord is in you and with you, He will bring you forth and of you, too, it shall be true in your own little way, “The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the headstone of the corner.”

At this time, however, we shall confine our application of these verses to our blessed Lord, Himself, to whom they most evidently refer. Their meaning is focused upon Him and, in reference to Him, each word is emphatic. He applied them to Himself, for Matthew tells us in the 21st chapter of his Gospel that our Lord said to the chief priests and Pharisees, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?” You remember, also, how Peter said in the face of the crucifiers of Christ, “Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nothing of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

In his first Epistle, Peter refers again to this Psalm in the wellremembered words, “Why also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.” Of our own exalted Lord we are going to speak at this time and may the Spirit bear witness in our hearts to His honor!

I. First, I invite your thoughts to CHRIST REJECTED—“The Stone which the builders refused.” The Lord Jesus came into this world at the fullness of time when the Messiah was expected by those devout men who waited for salvation in Israel. He came born of parents descended from that royal house from which Messiah was prophesied as coming and He was born in the very city which had been pointed out by Seers of old! All details of His life in His early days corresponded with prophetic intimations and answered to the signs which the Lord had appointed. There was nothing in which He did that did not exactly fit the symbols of the sanctuary and the personal types of history! Everything which could speak cried with one voice, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

He was clearly placed before the Jewish people as the Stone which God would lay in Zion as the Foundation of their hopes, but they persistently refused Him. It was not from lack of evidence, for John came prophesying concerning Him and, as I have already said, John was but the last of a long list of Prophets who had all pointed to Him as the Anointed of the Lord—and yet Israel rejected Him! His own miracles and teaching were more than sufficient evidence of His mission, but Israel would have none of Him! He was a Stone evidently of God’s quarrying and preparing. His extraordinary birth marked Him out as differing from all the rest of mankind! His surpassing excellence and moral beauty declared Him to be destined to the highest position!

His Person displayed the marvelous love and wisdom of God and with half an eye, if they had willed to see it, the Jews might have perceived that He was anointed to be the Cornerstone of the spiritual Temple—but yet they refused Him! “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” He came to those who had the oracles, but in this thing they set at nothing the oracles! He came to those who had the Law and the Prophets, but they were deaf to all holy testimonies and disowned Him! Alas, for the blindness of men’s hearts! His rejection was rendered the more remarkable and the more sorrowful because He was rejected by the builders or leaders of the nation. “The Stone which the builders refused.”

If the common people, who were ignorant of the Law, had not perceived Him to be the chosen Stone, we might not have wondered. But there were men of learning and research among the people and these rejected Him! They had builders who understood spiritual architecture, or professed to do so—the scribes who studied the Law and the priests who taught the people—these were the master builders whose business it was to make the selection of the Cornerstone. But these rejected our Lord. It was not only the mob of Jerusalem that rejected Christ, but the rulers led the way! True, the many cried, “Crucify Him!” but not till they were bribed by the priests, the clergy of the day, the Sadducees, the skeptical men of science, the Pharisees and ritualistic professors—these were they who sat in Moses’ seat—in whom the people had confidence! And by their evil, the people were led to reject the Cornerstone which the Lord Himself had laid!

Concerning this rejection we must also remark that it was no common one—it was a violent and indignant rejection! They were not content to say, “He is not the Messiah,” but they turned their hottest malice against Him! They were furious at the sight of Him! This precious Stone was kicked against and rolled about with violence and all manner of ridicule was poured upon it. Nothing would content them but the blood of the Man who had disturbed their consciences and questioned their pretensions. “The Stone which the builders refused” is to be read with a heavy stress upon the word REFUSED. Peter says, “He was set at nothing of you builders.” They slandered Him in life and mocked Him in death! They spat their accusations against Him when He was free and gave Him over to be defiled with the spit of the soldiers’ mouths when He was bound! They made Him live an outcast’s life and then they hung Him up to die a felon’s death!

This rejection was most unreasonable—they did violence to truth and justice by their evil deed. For which of His works did they stone Him? There was nothing in His Character which should have incensed them! There was nothing about Him which ought to have excited their doubts, much less their wrath. But yet they willfully and resolutely rejected Him. They said, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” The cause, in part, was blind prejudice. They expected a king surrounded with earthly pomp and girt with physical force to break the Roman yoke and create an Israelite empire more famous than that of Solomon.

But because He came as the Son of a lowly virgin, robed in a peasant’s dress and humbly dwelt among the sons of men in meekest fashion, therefore they refused Him. There was no real reason why He should have been refused because of His humiliation, for was not their Messiah so to come? Did not Isaiah say, “He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” He agreed with the prophecies, but not with their prejudices and, therefore, they cried, “Away with Him! Away with Him.” Those prejudices were the result of sheer ignorance, for if they had studied the Word of God they would have seen that the Christ of God was not the Christ of their dreams! And had they searched the Scriptures they might have known that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lord of Glory!

They had eyes, but would not see! The Light was around them, but they comprehended Him not. The pride of their hearts kept them in ignorance—they did not want to know! The proud philosophic Sadducee felt sure of his ground, for he was a thinker and despised the vulgar—he did not wish for evidence as to the existence of angel or spirit, or of the resurrection of the dead—therefore he scornfully rejected the Man who brought life and immortality to light! The Pharisee, supremely righteous in himself, did not want to know a Man who taught him that he was lost and came to be the Savior of sinners. He felt too safe, already, to need saving! Thus the Ever-Blessed was chased out of the world by the pride which scorns all excellence except its own!

Men flung away God’s dearest Jewel because He outshone their own counterfeit jewelry! Nor was it pride, alone, for that mother sin was surrounded with all other evils. They wanted to devour widows’ houses in secret and He exposed them! They wanted to go on saying their long prayers and yet to persecute the righteous—and Jesus unmasked them! Certain of them wanted to be free-thinkers and yet to be thought orthodox—and He denounced them as hypocrites! They denied the essential principles of Revelation, but He came forth from the Father to bear witness of God and, therefore, they utterly abhorred Him! Their sin, as it could not associate with His holiness, raised a clamor against Him and with cunning and malice they denounced, condemned and utterly rejected the Stone which God had appointed to be the Foundation and Cornerstone of His New Jerusalem!

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you know what came of it. They threw that chosen Stone away and when they had removed it away from their Babel-building they thought their troubles at an end when, indeed, they had just begun! That Stone was removed out of the way and yet they stumbled upon Him—they stumbled to their own confusion—yes, they stumbled to their own destruction! How broken were they by that Stone at the awful siege of Jerusalem when they and their city perished! Now, also, that Stone has been lifted up into Heaven by the mighty power of God and in the fullness of time it will descend upon these foolish builders with terrible effect—for upon whomever it shall fall it will grind him to powder!

Even while that Stone was here, they fell upon Him and were broken! But when He comes a second time, He will fall upon them and woe unto them in that Day! Let us not be among the company of the rejecters! Let us not consort with those who cast doubts upon the Gospel of Jesus! Rather let our hearts joyfully bless God for appointing Him to be the Headstone of the corner! Let us accept Him in that Character and at once build upon Him—

*“Chosen of God, to sinners dear,  
And saints adore the name!  
We trust our whole salvation here,  
Nor shall we suffer shame.”*

God forbid that we should reject the testimony of God concerning His Son and so make God a liar and bring down eternal wrath upon our own heads! Our safety lies in reception, not in rejection, for to “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

As for those who reject Him, we hear with trembling these words from the lips of the loving Jesus—“But those, My enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before Me.”

II. With great delight I now pass to the second topic which is CHRIST EXALTED—“The Stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the corner”—that is to say, at this moment Christ has the chief place of honor in the building of God! He is the Headstone, for He is higher than the kings of the earth! He is higher than all the opposing powers of wisdom or of superstition and He is the Head over all things to His Church! Glory be to His name—in the midst of His people He is above all and over all—we worship Him with rapture!

He is King of kings and Lord of lords, “for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him,” There is none like He among the sons of men! In all things He has the preeminence. He that was crucified is now enthroned! He that lay in the grave now reigns in Glory! Nor is He only eminent for His position of honor, but for His surpassing usefulness! He is the Headstone of the corner, that Stone which joins two walls together and is the bond of the building—Jew and Gentile are now one in Christ Jesus!  
It is true He is a Stone in Israel’s wall, but He is also a Stone in the

Gentile’s wall. In Him is neither Jew nor Gentile distinctively, for they are both there inclusively. He has made both one! The Pharisees would have it that the wall should finish within the line of Judah’s race, but not so thought our Master! His heart went forth to the other sheep which He had that were not yet of the fold. This made them wrathful, but their wrath did not prevent His accomplishing His design and now He is the Bond of the building, holding Jew and Gentile in firm unity! This precious Cornerstone binds God and man together in wondrous amity, for He is both in one! He joins earth and Heaven together, for He participates in each! He joins time and eternity together, for He was a man of few years and yet He is the Ancient of Days!

Wondrous Cornerstone! You bind all of us together who are in You, so that by love of You we are built together for a temple of the Holy Spirit! You are the perfect Bond, the eternal Holdfast, the Divine Cement which holds the universe in one! Is it not written, “By Him all things consist”? Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, is brought up from all rejection and shame to which His enemies put Him. He is, by usefulness and by honor, the grandest Person upon the face of the earth! And all this, none the less, but all the more, because He was rejected! He lost nothing by His enemies. They scourged His back, but they did not rob Him of that imperial purple which now adorns Him! They crowned Him with thorns, but those thorns have increased the brilliance of His diadem of light!

They pierced His hands and thereby prepared them to sway an irresistible scepter of love over men’s hearts! They nailed His feet, but those feet stand firm forever upon the Throne of Sovereignty! They crucified Him, but His crucifixion led Him to His greater honor, since He therein finished the work which was given Him to do and now, also, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name! As it has been, so is it, and so shall it be—man’s opposition to the Gospel will not interfere with it one single whit—but the eternal purposes of Jehovah shall be fulfilled! Our adversaries may mine and undermine. They may openly oppose and secretly assail. But upon this Rock, even upon Christ, shall the Truth and the Church forever rest and no harm shall come to it! The Lord will lift the Stone which the builders refused and make it to become the Headstone of the corner—therefore let us not fail nor be discouraged!

Already our text has been fulfilled! Our Lord Christ was dead and buried, but His foes were desperately afraid that He would rise again and so they rolled a stone to the tomb’s mouth and sealed it. But He rose, for all that, and became the first fruits of them that slept, the Headstone of the Resurrection! His Resurrection utterly defeated those who reckoned upon destroying His power! What could they do against One whom Death itself could not silence? When His Resurrection attested His mission, what could they say against Him? Nor was this all, for to add to His honor, He was received up into Heaven! Beyond the eternal hills He rose, the gates of Heaven opening at His coming! And amidst the acclamation of angels and redeemed spirits, He ascended to the highest place that Heaven affords! What a change from Gabbatha and all the maltreatment of the Pavement to the sea of glass mingled with fire and to the seat of infinite Majesty! Jesus has gone from the bar to the Throne, and there He sits in majesty! His adversaries may grind their teeth at Him, but the King is set upon the holy hill of Zion beyond their wrath. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” Jehovah Jesus is King and none can challenge His sovereignty! At Pentecost, too, this was fulfilled, for when His few and humble disciples were inspired by the Holy Spirit and began to speak with tongues of fire, all Jerusalem rang with the wonder— and then, again, the despised and rejected Stone was made the Headstone of the corner!

Very speedily throughout the known world the testimony of His name was made to sound forth till His Word had gone forth as far as the sun’s utmost track and all nations beheld the light thereof. Then the gods of the heathen tottered and colossal systems of idolatry were ground to powder. Glory be unto You, O Christ! You did triumph gloriously in those first ages of Your Church! That triumph is still proceeding. It will be consummated by-and-by. What confusion will take hold upon the hearts of His adversaries when He shall be revealed! He is hidden now and His people with Him, but the day draws near when He shall come a second time to be admired in all them that believe! What astonishment will then take hold upon those who refused His righteous claims! Then will they know that this is the Lord’s doing though it will be terrible in their eyes! All intelligent beings, even down to the blackest devil of Hell, shall, at the Second Advent of our Lord be obliged to confess that the Stone which the builders refused has become the Headstone of the corner!

The Man of Nazareth shall be Lord of all before the eyes of all mankind! We look forward to that Day! I call upon you, dear Brothers and Sisters, this morning, to greatly rejoice in the fact which we have thus brought before you! It is a grand Truth of God that Christ Jesus is now enthroned beyond the reach of those who rejected and despised Him—

*“Honor immortal must be paid,  
Instead of scandal and of scorn  
While glory shines around His head,  
And a bright crown without a thorn.”*

III. Thirdly, I ask your attention to the next point, which is introduced to us by the 23rd verse. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST IS DUE TO GOD ALONE—“This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.” Now, this was so as a matter of history. Jesus Christ’s name and work were, at length, had in honor in the world, but this was due to no man’s wisdom, eloquence, or power, but entirely to the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel and great in might! Look, my Brothers and Sisters, if the Scribes and Pharisees had endorsed the claims of our Lord, it might have been said that Christianity was grafted upon the old stock of Judaism and, therefore, grew with vigor.

And if Pilate, or Herod, or any of the great ones, especially if the Caesar of the day had accepted it, then the following ages would have said, “Oh yes, He derived His power and was lifted to His place through the prestige of empire and the prowess of arms.” But it was not so! All the establishments on earth were against Him—rank and station despised the carpenter’s Son—superstition abhorred His simplicity and spirituality! Ceremonialism would have nothing to do with Him who said that the Temple was to be destroyed! Skepticism could not endure Him, for He gave not a jot of ground for its doubts, or food for its speculations!

And the kings of the earth and the statesmen utterly derided Him, for He spoke of a kingdom which was not of this world! And yet He triumphed, and now His name is the most famous among the sons of men! This was not because poets sat waiting upon Parnassus to pour forth their loftiest lays, or because minstrels, with their fingers on their harp strings, stood prepared to draw forth matchless music to celebrate His advent. No, the hymns which were composed in His honor had a lowly virgin and an equally humble matron as their authors. And the music which saluted Him was the noise of children in the streets, shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” The Son of Man owes nothing of His glory to man—His elevation to the throne is the Lord’s doing and marvelous in our eyes!

And while this is true as to the past, it remains true at this day, for the Gospel of Christ, whenever it spreads in the earth, owes its triumphs entirely to Divine interposition. When I consider how hostile is human nature to the Gospel, the very existence of a True Church in the world is, to me, a miracle! Nor to me, alone, does it appear so, for it really is a superhuman work and is worked by the Lord alone! Just think of it. Why, at this very day, we have all the wisdom and power and eloquence and skill of the superstition of the world arrayed against the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though they are agreed in nothing else, they all unite against Christ!

He of the Seven Hills has nothing but maledictions for the pure Gospel of Jesus and with him stand a hierarchy clothed with terrible power and a troop of Jesuits who stop at nothing! Completely organized, numerous, subtle, all-pervading—the warriors of Rome are a great host and not to be lightly thought upon! See how superstition multiplies in this land! See how the builders, appointed by the State to build up a Protestant Church, are pulling it down with both hands! These are priests, clergy—God’s heritage! And what are they doing? Lifting up an idolatrous crucifix in the place of the doctrine of the Cross! They are setting sacraments in the place of the precious blood and preaching salvation by their own priestcraft instead of salvation by the Grace of God through Jesus Christ!

The builders are rejecting Him and yet His cause lives on! The wise men on the other side of the house, the builders who claim to be scientific scholars and persons of advanced thought and thorough culture—these, also, have their fling against the Gospel. For anything I can see of their pretended depth of learning, I would recommend them to attend to their science and obtain a little more culture before they set up for

 teachers or they may expose their own shallowness. These boastfully wise men, these self-styled thinking men are all against the Gospel of Jesus Christ! When I see the power which, at the present time, is enlisted on the side of doubt and skepticism, I, for my part, am astonished that anybody believes the Gospel at all—and I feel that it is the Lord’s doing and marvelous in my eyes!

True faith is supernatural—it stands not in the wisdom of man, but in Divine power! Wherever Christ is exalted, as, blessed be His name, He is in many Churches, it is not because of any wit or skill or power on the part of the minister, but because the Holy Spirit is at work among the people bringing them to Christ! Do not, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, despond on behalf of Christ’s cause. The real progress of Christianity must be supernatural! Whenever we fight with the wooden sword of reason, we may expect to be defeated—not because the Gospel is against reason or contrary to it—but because it is so much above reason that we cannot comprehend it and, therefore, lose power by hearing Gospel Truth as if it were a human discovery!

If there is not working with Christianity a Divine agency altogether above its reasonableness. If there is not, in fact, the Spirit of God working with it to convert men, then it will come to nothing and vanish like other systems. Our reliance must be, therefore, not upon evidences which we can bring to prove the Truth of the Gospel, nor upon eloquence by which we may advance its claims, but upon the Eternal Spirit of God, for it is He, and He alone, who can lift the rejected Stone and make it to become the Headstone of the corner! It is impossible for blinded human nature to believe the Truth of God! And, therefore, we must be born again! Gospel teachings are so humbling, so radical, so pure, so spiritual, so much above our thoughts that nobody will accept them unless taught of God! His chosen people shall be taught of the Spirit and the rest will choose to remain in blindness. So it has been, and so it ever shall be!

But, Beloved, let us not tremble because of this, for despite human blindness and the opposition of the wise, Christ must reign even to the world’s end. Did I hear a whisper that ministers are, nowadays, very broad and have given up the old Gospel? I know it and I am not surprised! The builders are the first to reject the chosen Stone. Christ owes little to preachers and some of His worst enemies are found in their ranks! Unconverted men are in too many pulpits and are seeking out many inventions to set aside the pure Gospel which exalts Christ Jesus. Let them alone! The ditch is gaping for these blind guides. Our Lord can do without them. He owes His victories to Himself and to Himself, alone! And, therefore, let the faith of His people rest in peace, for if they will have patience, they shall see greater things than they have yet beheld.

Our text says that it is not only the Lord’s doing and marvelous, but it is marvelous, “in our eyes,” which it could not be if we did not see it. We shall see and we shall marvel! Some of us may have passed away, but you who are younger may live to see modern thought obtain supremacy over human minds—German rationalism which has ripened into Socialism may yet pollute the mass of mankind and lead them to overturn the foundations of society. Then “advanced principles” will hold carnival and free thought will riot with the vice and blood which were years ago the insignia of “the age of reason.” I say not that it will be so, but I should not wonder if it came to pass, for deadly principles are abroad and certain ministers are spreading them!

If it ever should be so, do not, O Believers, for a single moment despair, but rest certain that the Lord is about to do a marvelous thing in the earth and that He will lift up, once again, the Stone which the builders

have again refused and cause it to become more than ever the Headstone of the corner! Never dream of defeat! Be calm amid all the din of controversy, for the hand which holds the Gospel must win the victory! This is the Lord’s doing and we shall see it!

IV. Let us now notice that THE EXALTATION OF THE REJECTED CHRIST COMMENCES A NEW ERA. For what says the 24th verse? “This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” We date from our Lord’s Resurrection, even as the Jews of old counted from the night wherein they went out of Egypt. What is this day which the Lord has made? I reply first, it is the day of the Gospel! Through our Lord’s exaltation, pardon for the guilty is freely preached among all nations and whoever believes in Him has everlasting life! Now is Christ exalted on high to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins! Now is He on the throne of power that He may be able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him!

Let us rejoice and be glad in Him. How can we rejoice and be glad in Him except by believing in Him? Come, let us believe the Gospel, the Gospel of the once rejected, but now exalted Savior! Let us put our trust in Him and then let us sing for joy of heart because we have a royal Savior, an exalted Savior, an almighty Savior in whose hands our souls are safe! The era of the Gospel ought to be a time of gladness, for its favors are rich, its light is clear, its promises are abundant and its truth is certain! To be unhappy, now that Jesus reigns, is to be ungrateful! It is a royal feast! Let us eat to the full and so honor the King and bless ourselves!

What day is this which the Lord has made? Why, in the next place, it is a Sabbath day, the beginning of a long line of Sabbaths! The day in which our Lord Jesus rose from the dead is now sacred to rest and holy joy. Let us keep it with reverent love and bless God for making it—

*“This is the day the Lord has made,  
He calls the hours His own.  
Let Heaven rejoice, let the earth be glad,  
And praise surround the Throne!  
Today He rose and left the dead  
And Satan’s empire fell!  
Today the saints His triumphs spread,  
And all His wonders tell.”*

The world calls the Sabbath, Sunday, do not let us turn it into Cloud-day! Certain good Christian people look upon the Lord’s Day as a season so solemn that it can only be properly kept by being as dreary as possible! Draw down the blinds, darken the room, chide the children, cherish every smile—now we are getting Sabbatic! Let us go up to the House of Prayer like convicts exercising in the prison yard and there let us be as decorously miserable as possible! Let the preacher be as dull and as monotonous as though he had no subject to preach about but death and destruction and must preserve an air of melancholy, or none would think him gracious!

Such is NOT the teaching of our Master, nor is it according to His mind and spirit! Herbert well says of the Sabbath—

*“You are a day of mirth,  
And where the weekdays trail on ground,  
Your flight is higher, as your birth.”*

It should be “a day most calm, most bright,” fit to be called, “the endorsement of supreme delight!” It is a time of the singing of birds, for the winter of our Lord’s humiliation is over and He has risen from the dead! Today we celebrate the Glory of Christ in the highest heavens as the elect of God and the cornerstone of His Church—surely it ill becomes us to go about with our hands upon our loins as if we mourned His victory and begrudged His honor! No, let us clap our hands with exultation! “The Lord reigns! Let the earth rejoice! Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.”

Again, “This is the day which the Lord has made.” The Resurrection of Christ commences an era of triumph! We have spoken of the Gospel day and the Sabbath day, but it is also a day of victories. As Jesus Christ rose from the dead, so will His Truth continually rise from the sepulcher into which men may cast it. As He triumphed over the powers of death and darkness, so will His Gospel triumph over all opposition! Whenever at any time your hearts are heavy, I would bid you stand at the open tomb of Christ and remember that He rose! And if He could not be held by the bands of death, certainly neither He nor His Gospel can be held by any other bands! His adversaries thrust His Gospel into the tomb again! They proclaim that the old doctrines are effete, but as surely as Jesus our Lord lives they shall see the Truth of God revive! Walk in patience, for the vision will not tarry. The day comes when in yet greater power the Gospel shall renew its youth and the world shall assuredly know that the Lord has done it!

Let us rejoice and be glad that we live in an era bright with victories of the right and the true. We may have to fight for them and wait for them, but they will surely come and Christ shall reign forever and ever! I would to God that the thought of the exalted Christ would be the beginning of days to some of you! This day began with sunlight but at this hour it deepens into gloom. The skies are overcast and a tempest is hurrying up. I trust that with my dear Hearers it may be the absolute reverse—that if you began this morning amid clouds of doubt and showers of tears, you may see Christ exalted in the highest Heaven because He has offered for you His great atoning Sacrifice—and may you look to Him and find clear shining after the rain, a great calm after a great storm!

V. I close by saying that THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST SUGGESTS A PRAYER. The 25th verse supplies us with it. “Save now, I beseech You, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech You, send now prosperity.” First, it is a prayer for salvation. It may mean, “God save the King: may Jesus live forever,” and in that sense we would make the heavens ring with it! But we will take it, this morning, to be a prayer for the salvation of men. Since Christ is the exalted and victorious Savior, let us beseech Him to save all those who are around us! Save them, Lord! Save them all! Save them NOW!

Put it in the present tense! Ask for a display of the present saving power of our exalted Head! O Christ Jesus, Prince and Lord, save the sinners in Zion! We beseech You save those who occupy these pews Sabbath after Sabbath and hear about You, but do not know You! Save, too, the strangers that are within Your gates and are strangers to You as well as to us. Save the careless, good Lord! Save the anxious! Save the seekers! By

Your Glory at the Father’s side, we beseech You, save men! Do you believe that Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God? If you do, all things are possible with Him and He has promised to hear prayer! Hear me then, you thousands of Israel, as I entreat you now to breathe one hearty unanimous prayer to this effect—“Save now, O Lord, we beseech You!”

Put the name of your child to the prayer if you please, or that of your wife, or father, or sister, or brother—but put up the prayer to Him who is enthroned on purpose to save! Save now, O Lord! You are no more despised and rejected! Unveil Your Glory by saving men! You could save even in Your agony—on the Cross you saved a dying thief! But now, in Glory, You have mightier power! Therefore, O Savior, save now! Will you not importunately urge that petition, O you who know His readiness to hear? Sinners, will you not pray thus for yourselves? Here, now, as we sit together in this dense gloom, so unusual in the month of June, let us feel that the shadow of the Eternal is brooding over us, that the Almighty is now covering us with His wings!

Do you not feel near to Him? Be sure of this, He is very near to you! Call upon Him while He is near! In all probability we shall, in a few moments, hear His majestic voice rolling in thunder through the sky and before long we shall see the flash of His glittering spears. Let all this deepen our reverence and prompt us to entreat Him now to save us! The God that thunders at His pleasure is near! Bow before Him and trust in His Son, Christ Jesus, and let the prayer go up, “SAVE NOW.” Do not wait for tomorrow, nor even until the storm has passed over, but now, even now, seek His salvation!

The other half of the prayer is for prosperity. “O Lord, send now prosperity.” This is what we continually need in this Church. The prayer is in harmony with the whole passage. Since, Lord, You have lifted the chief Stone into its place, be pleased to raise up other stones of Your Temple into their places! O fit them, one upon another, and send a prosperous building up! Lord, You have conquered all the foes of Christ—come and conquer the foes of your Church today. Lord, You did gather out a people to His praise and build up a Church in the first centuries of Christianity and then Your Son Jesus was gloriously the Corner and Headstone! Come again and build up Your own Church throughout all the lands, a Church in which the Lord Jesus shall be exalted even to the highest!

“Send now prosperity.” I pray you, Beloved, join in this prayer! Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and prosperity, for they that love her and her peace still have great happiness. Join in the supplication to the once rejected but now exalted covenant Head of the Church and the Lord will bless you for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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